

People and Planning Alnwick Local Development Framework

Alnwick Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document

Adopted May 2010



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1 INTRODUCTION

THE LANDSCAPE OF ALNWICK DISTRICT

1.1 The landscape of Alnwick District is often spectacular and is certainly varied. In basic terms the landscape of the district consists of an eastern lowland alongside the North Sea coast and a western upland rising to the foothills of the Cheviots. The renowned scenic quality of the coastal strip and the westernmost uplands are recognised at National level through their designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and defined heritage coast and a National Park respectively. Outside of these designations, the scenic quality of a very high proportion of the district has also been recognised in the past by local landscape designations. This indicates that landscapes of the District are a valuable asset and worthy of efforts being made to protect and enhance them. It is likely that the landscape will be increasingly important to the local economy in the future - a resource that will need to meet the demands and expectations of visitors whilst also sustaining the needs of business and the quality of life of the people who live and work in the area.

1.2 Elements of this landscape resource are vulnerable, and face pressures for change on a number of fronts. If left unchecked, these pressures will erode the special qualities, character and diversity of the district. In preparing this supplementary planning document (SPD) and its supporting background documents, one of the main objectives has been to guide change in such a way that the landscape character and local distinctiveness of the District can be conserved, reinforced and where necessary enhanced.

A NEW APPROACH

1.3 This SPD serves as a new approach to guiding development. This new approach regards all landscapes as valuable and seeks to protect their essential character by making sure that the change that takes place supports and enhances rather than erodes landscape character.

ABOUT THE SPD

1.4 The SPD provides guidance for the public, developers and planning officers in relation to the landscape character of the District, how this affects new development and vice versa. It covers all rural parts of the District excluding those areas within the Northumberland National Park, which is covered by a different planning regime. It has been prepared under new arrangements introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

1.5 The SPD supports Alnwick Core Strategy Policy S13 (see overleaf page 3), which requires all proposals for development and change to take into consideration landscape character. The aim of the SPD is to provide guidance on what this means for the different landscape character areas covered by the core strategy within the former District excluding the area of the National Park as identified by the joint Alnwick and Castle Morpeth Landscape Character Assessment.

POLICY S13 - Landscape Character

All proposals for development and change will be considered against the need to protect and enhance the distinctive landscape character of the district. All proposals will be assessed in terms of their impact on landscape features and should respect the prevailing landscape quality, character and sensitivity of each area as defined in the Alnwick District Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document.

1.6 There are 25 Landscape Character Areas in the district, as illustrated on Figure 1 (Page 26). The key characteristics of each of these character areas are set out in Section 6 of this document.

1.7 The prime aim of the guidance in this document is to make developers and others aware of Landscape Character and to prompt consideration of the landscape in design thinking at an early stage in development projects. In this way, it is intended that prospective applicants for planning consent will understand the landscape criteria they need to meet and that consequently there will be a stronger likelihood that the design concept for their proposal will meet policy objectives and be more likely to pass smoothly through the planning system.

1.8 Specific additional guidance on landscape character and sensitivity in relation to onshore wind energy developments and their associated infrastructure in the former Alnwick District can be found in the Planning for Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Document Adopted November 2009.

1.9 The various aspects of guidance in this SPD will vary in their relevance depending on the location of a development site, and as such are intended to be used flexibly. The suggested solutions to problems will only help when applied appropriately. This is not an arbitrary approach that assumes that the ideal answer is known before considering the question. The aim is not to develop copies of the traditional style buildings but to create development which responds sympathetically to the surrounding landscape character.

2 HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

2.1 The purpose of this document is not to stifle new and innovative development. Indeed, exciting and innovative design is encouraged. However, there is a need to ensure that future development responds to the landscape context so that it reinforces local distinctiveness and protects and enhances landscape quality.

2.2 Depending on the scale, complexity and location of the development and the sensitivity of the proposed setting, it may be appropriate to seek professional landscape advice to help you through this process. There may also be a need for a more detailed landscape and visual impact assessment to be carried out in accordance with the methodology in the publication 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' produced by the Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Assessment and Management (2002). Initially, a discussion with a Council Planning Officer may be helpful in determining whether this will be required. Should it become apparent that landscape advice is needed, information about the Landscape profession is provided later in this document.

2.3 There are five suggested steps to follow when using the SPD:

Step One:

- Identify the Landscape Character Area within which your site is located, using the map on page 26.
- Look at the section of the SPD that deals with that Landscape Character Area (within Section 6 page 25).
- Note any points that are particularly relevant to the site or your proposal.
- Note any specific national landscape designations/definitions that apply to the area.

Step Two:

- Identify the landscape management guidelines that apply to the Landscape Character Area.
- Consider how the development proposal could contribute to the management guidelines and the extent to which it can contribute to the re-creation, restoration, enhancement, repair and maintenance or pro active conservation of the landscape likely to be affected.
- Also identify any other best practice management guidance on landscape of relevance to the proposal (for example Forestry Commission Design of Forest Landscapes; Northumberland Coast AONB Management Plan).

Step Three:

- Section 5 of this document provides guidelines specific to a range of development types that might be expected to occur in the region.
- If the development in question falls within one of these categories, it may be useful to note the advice contained here and also refer to the more detailed information contained in the joint Alnwick and Castle Morpeth Landscape Character Assessment.
- Developers should also identify current best practice guidance relevant to their specialism.

Step Four:

- Look at the site in relation to its wider landscape setting.
- Think about how the development you are considering will fit into the local landscape. You may find it helpful to also look at similarly scaled developments in the surrounding landscape, especially if they fall within the same Landscape Character Area, to see how they relate to the landscape.

Some key questions to consider are:

Site planning

- How will the development integrate with existing buildings, trees, habitats and other landscape and historic features both within and/or adjacent to the proposed site?
- What would be the optimum layout in this respect?
- Does it contribute to the local distinctiveness of the area?
- Does it avoid ridge lines and important views?

Development form

- Consider the overall visual impact of the development including the height, width and depth of the new development, the arrangement of buildings relative to each other and the shape of any enclosures.
- Can they be / have they been arranged in sympathy with what currently exists?

Development detail

- Consider the colours and textures of construction materials selected for buildings as well as for hard standings and other surfaces and boundary treatments. How does it relate to locally used materials?
- Is there a local building style, pattern or scale of windows, doors, walls or railings?

How to relate to the landscape setting?

- How can the interface with adjoining areas be treated?
- What types of boundaries exist locally? Incorporation of similar boundaries may help to tie the development into the landscape?
- Would the use of tree planting or habitat creation or the introduction of other landscape features on undeveloped parts of your site help to make links between the development and the wider landscape?

Step Five:

- Armed with the information gathered in the preceding steps, developers should now be aware of Landscape Character and be in a position to incorporate appropriate design solutions into a planning application. It will be helpful to demonstrate how the above issues have been considered in the design by incorporating your thought process into your design and access statement – a requirement of most planning applications.

3 THE NATURE OF THE LANDSCAPE AND FORCES FOR CHANGE

3.1 The former Alnwick District covers a substantial proportion [approximately one fifth] of the county of Northumberland. The landscape in the most basic terms consists of an eastern lowland running from the North Sea coast and rising to a western upland. The landscape character descriptions within this SPD have been derived from a number of sources including the Alnwick and Castle Morpeth Landscape Character Assessment 2006; Countryside Character Volume 1 North East 1998 Countryside Commission (now Natural England); the Northumberland Coast Landscape Assessment 1996; the Northumberland Coast AONB Management Plan; Landscape Appraisal for Onshore Wind Energy 2003 (NEREG). In addition, account has been taken of the work carried out in adjoining former District areas of Berwick-upon-Tweed, Tynedale and the Northumberland National Park. In preparing this background information to the landscape character assessment a principal source was “New Naturalist Northumberland” by Angus Lunn (Collins, 2004).

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

3.2 The main physical influences that play a part in shaping the landscape are the underlying geology land form and the pattern of land cover.

GEOLOGY

3.3 Most of the former Alnwick District overlies sedimentary rocks (limestones, mudstones, shales, siltstones, sandstones and coal seams) that were originally deposited in riverbeds and under the sea. Often there is a sequence of alternating weak and resistant rock types with a significant dip, resulting in a distinctive series of landforms known as *cuesta's*. These are ridges with a steep (scarp) face on one side and a gentle (dip) slope on the other. The *cuesta's* tend to form arcs around the Cheviot Hills, with the scarps facing inwards. Many of the long upland view points in the district are from the crests of these features.

3.4 In addition to this sedimentary geology, there are notable igneous volcanic rock features. These are the Cheviot Hills which are the remains of volcanoes and the Whin Sill which is composed of sheets of igneous rock that were squeezed as magma between the sedimentary rocks. The resistance of these hard rocks is what allows them to stand out in the landscape. Thus the Cheviots stand out as the tallest hills in the district and the Whin Sill reveals itself as localised high points such as at the site of Dunstanburgh Castle. At the coast, the alternating sedimentary layers interspersed with igneous sills are expressed in a distinctive sequence of cliffed headlands, bays and reefs.

LAND COVER

3.5 The main land cover types of the district are:

Moorland

3.6 Moorland and blanket mire occurs in the western uplands on poor, often waterlogged soils. These areas tend to be either extensively grazed by livestock or where dominated by heather, managed for shooting, with red grouse habitat sustained by cyclical burning. The heather moorland at Simonside Hills and Harbottle Moors is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Coniferous woodland

3.7 Extensive areas of the Alnwick uplands were planted with conifers during the last century. The forests generally consist of regimented rows of a single species (often Sitka spruce) and often have harsh geometric outlines. In addition to the large forests such as Thrunton and Harwood, numerous smaller plantations can be seen in parts of the landscape – often occupying field corners or performing as shelterbelts on farms.

Deciduous trees and woodland

3.8 Trees and woodland, whether in the form of fragments of ancient woodland along river valleys or as individual hedgerow or parkland trees, make a significant contribution to the diversity of landscapes in the district. In Northumberland generally, survival of ancient woodland is poor, accounting for only 0.5% of the land area compared with 2% nationally. Most of what survives is oak dominated. A number of woodlands are designated as SSSIs, including those along the River Coquet.

Farmland

3.9 Farming is the dominant land use in Alnwick, with a mosaic of arable and unimproved/semi improved pasture fields evident across most of the district. Within this patchwork hedgerows and hedgerow trees and field margins are perhaps the core landscape and ecological resource. In some areas dry stone walls also provide distinctive features. A small number of traditionally managed upland hay meadows survive on the upland fringes.

Rivers

3.10 The principal rivers in the former district are the Aln, the Coquet and the Breamish. The rivers of the district are relatively unspoilt with good water quality and relatively little of the modification that has occurred elsewhere in the UK. Most rivers support otter, an indication of the general good health of the system. The River Coquet is recognised as being one of the most natural complete river systems in Britain and is designated as a SSSI.

The Coast

3.11 The Northumberland Coast is covered by multiple national and international designations in recognition of its natural beauty and importance as a wildlife habitat. The whole shore of the district forms part of the Northumberland Shore SSSI, which is both a

European designated Special Protection Area an internationally recognised RAMSAR site (known as the Northumbria Shore SPA) and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The shoreline and seabed north of the Aln estuary are also covered by a number of European designations - these include Coquet Island SPA, North Northumberland Dunes SAC, Berwickshire and North Northumberland Dunes SAC. The coast is home to large numbers of waders and seabirds as well as interesting geological assemblages. Onshore, there are significant areas of SSSI designated dune habitat and salt marsh at Alnmouth, Warkworth and Newton links.

HUMAN INFLUENCES/LAND USE

Agriculture

3.12 Landscape character is very much influenced by land-use history and influences on the landscape can be found from pre Roman through to Roman, medieval and modern times. A number of historical themes have combined to influence the present day landscape of the district. The position of the district on the frontier of first the Roman Empire and later between England against Scotland created instability that influenced the nature of historic land use, land ownership and built form. A number of castles (Alnwick, Dunstanburgh) and defensible structures such as pele towers were built as a result. The subsequent emergence of a peaceful society led to a successful and efficient lowland agriculture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with a high proportion of land in large estates, the owners of which were able to build mansions and create parks and gardens.

3.13 Agricultural reform, was carried further in Northumberland than anywhere else in Britain. By the middle of the nineteenth-century enclosure of the lowlands had been completed - much of it, before the period of Parliamentary enclosures. The lowlands were laid out in large rectangular hedged fields. Most of the moorlands were also enclosed. Compared with other parts of northern England, Northumberland was left with relatively little common land.

3.14 Farms, which had previously been crammed into villages for security, were dispersed to form substantial farm steadings in a period of rebuilding - mainly in sandstone - dating from about 1780 to 1850. By 1841 it was stated that Northumberland exhibited agriculture 'approaching probably as near to perfection as any that this country at present exhibits'.

3.15 Perhaps because of previous instability a larger proportion of Northumberland was held in large estates by the end of the nineteenth century than in any other English county. Still today, Northumberland has the highest percentage of rented land in England, as well as the largest average farm holding size.

Minerals

3.16 Mineral resources have been exploited in the former district since before the medieval era. In the mid nineteenth century numerous large and small quarries were also opened up for building stone and limestone, along with clay pits and sand and gravel workings. Lime for soil improvement and mortar was supplied by hundreds of lime kilns in both uplands and lowlands exploiting local limestone and coal. Port development also took place at Amble, Alnmouth and Craster.

3.17 An historic landscape characterisation programme has been prepared for Northumberland County Council and should be used to complement the guidance in this SPD.

FORCES FOR CHANGE

3.18 The landscape is constantly evolving in response to human activity and natural processes. Changes in agriculture, industry, society and the environment can have profound and lasting influence. While these forces continue to influence the landscape, change is also being driven by a diverse range of increasingly international forces, including climate change and globalisation.

3.19 The pace of change at landscape level is often gradual and incremental and therefore less immediately perceptible. The implications of change on landscape character are often difficult to assess, as change can be regarded as being negative by some but may be seen as an improvement by others. Perceptions and values change with time and new elements introduced to the landscape may eventually be regarded as valuable landscape features.

3.20 This section of the SPD provides an overview of the key drivers of more recent landscape change in the area and anticipates the likely forces for future landscape change in the area. Potential pressures vary in their importance depending upon geographical location. Management guidelines on protecting and enhancing the landscape in response to these key forces for change is addressed in the individual character area descriptions later in the document.

OVERVIEW OF KEY ISSUES

Built development

3.21 The ongoing pressure for new development and in particular for supply of new housing exerts pressure upon areas of the rural landscape. Parts of the open countryside and the coast are seen as desirable places to live. This creates a need for strategic planning of where development might occur without adversely affecting landscape character and/or quality. In addition changes in farming and agricultural policies in favour of diversification of farm businesses has also increased the demand for new development in the countryside and conversion of barns and other redundant buildings to provide houses or holiday accommodation is likely to continue. There is also a need to ensure that building design and materials used to support rather than erode local distinctiveness.

Infrastructure development

3.22 There are ongoing pressures for the construction of new and upgrading of existing infrastructure, particularly roads, mobile phone masts, wind farms and other renewable energy technologies. Tall, industrial structures can be intrusive in areas with an undeveloped character and distinctive landform, particularly when they break the skyline and are therefore potentially significant across long distances. In particular wind energy development also introduces ancillary components to the landscape including substations, control buildings, access tracks and electricity connections.

Mineral extraction

3.23 The extraction of minerals, particularly coal, has been a significant influence of the landscape of parts of the District. The nature of quarrying and opencast extraction are such that they can exert a widespread visual influence which can profoundly change the way that the landscape is perceived and experienced often long after restoration has been completed.

Land Management

3.24 Agriculture is the dominant land use within the SPD area. Many of the landscape features are dependent on the continuation of traditional rural practices. Major structural changes are occurring in the way that British and European farming is managed and funded. The effects of these changes have been exacerbated by crises such as the BSE and Foot and Mouth disease outbreaks, and mean that fundamental issues are being faced by the agricultural sector. As farmers are the primary custodians of the majority of the landscape, many elements of the fabric of the landscape are potentially threatened by widespread and fundamental change. Overall there is an ongoing trend to larger farm units, development of new working methods and the decline of traditional skills.

Trees, forests and woodland

3.25 Commercial plantations are dominant landscape elements in some parts of the district. It is important to consider the way in which new forests and existing plantations can be integrated with the landscape. A change in emphasis in the role of our forests from suppliers of timber to multi functional areas including for recreation is also happening. Conversion of land to grow short rotation coppice biomass crops may have an impact on landscape character in the future.

Tourism and recreation

3.26 The drive for healthier lifestyles, increases in leisure time and legislation for wider access to land will all increase demands of the landscape. There is also a risk that the increasing numbers of visitors attracted to the region will damage the very resource they come to enjoy through potential increases in traffic and associated congestion, car parking requirements, erosion, and noise impacts. Consideration needs to be given in relation to how increasing numbers of visitors will be accommodated; both in terms of managing demand for tourism development and in ensuring that local infrastructure can cope with additional loading without significant adverse impacts on landscape character.

Historic landscapes

3.27 The current landscape reflects past land uses, management and pressures. The wealth of historical and archaeological features throughout the area is a unique aspect of its landscape heritage and many of these features are also important and well-known landmarks. As the tourism industry strengthens, demand for interpretation, preservation and understanding of these assets is likely to increase. Conversely, many of these features are threatened by lack of awareness, neglect, insensitive management practices and by ongoing landscape change. Insensitive management practices can include for example ploughing out archaeological sites or historic field patterns, degrading the setting of sites

or traditional and historic buildings through lack of maintenance and repair, or obscuring physical remains under vegetation cover. There is a need for careful conservation of the features themselves, and wherever possible, their wider landscape setting.

4 LANDSCAPE POLICY IN ALNWICK DISTRICT

OVERVIEW

4.1 The common view of landscape tends to be just that – the view. While landscape includes the view it is also the result of a complex combination of physical and cultural elements, the character of which has been created over a long period of people working with the land. The European Landscape Convention definition of landscape as 'an area perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. Landscape character is defined as 'a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape'. The landscape is continually changing but it is important to recognise where it may be fragile or vulnerable to damage through neglect or inappropriate development.

4.2 With growing evidence that present day processes of change often degrade rather than strengthen the character of the countryside, there is an urgent need to find effective mechanisms for reversing this trend. This does not mean that we need to go backwards to some rural idyll, even if this were possible, but if we are serious about conserving the character of the countryside we need to find ways to retain pattern and diversity in landscape. The challenge that we are faced with is to find new ways of accommodating change, whilst maintaining that link with the past which helps to give us a sense of belonging. Maintaining this link will require a commitment not only to manage the countryside, but also to guide and control the forces for change.

THE POLICY

4.3 The following policy guideline has been developed in line with and expanding on policy S13 of the Alnwick District Local Development Framework Core Strategy and in line with National planning policy advice.

POLICY GUIDELINE

Development will be informed by, and be sympathetic to, the prevailing landscape character and quality. It will contribute to the policy objective for the landscape management guideline in which it is located comprising re-creation, restoration, enhancement, repair and maintenance or proactive conservation of the landscape likely to be affected.

Development with landscape and visual implications will be assessed against the extent it will:

(a) cause significant visual harm;

(b) introduce or remove incongruous landscape elements;

(c) maintain or cause the loss of:

(i) landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness

(ii) historic elements that contribute to landscape character and quality

(iii) semi – natural vegetation that is characteristic of the landscape type

(iv) the visual condition of landscape elements that combine to create the distinctive character with particular regard to the impact of surface water.

(v) tranquillity of the area

Background - A strategy based on landscape character

4.4 In the mid-1990s, Natural England (formerly at the time known as the Countryside Commission) recognised the need to look beyond the areas of landscape with special qualities, such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which it had originally been charged with protecting. It needed to develop policies for the whole countryside, and as a basis for this it needed to commission a consistent analysis of the character of the landscapes of England. From this, a project that came to be called the Character of England project emerged. The output from this project was a map which divided England into 159 discrete Regional Character Areas (RCAs) based on the interaction at a regional scale between the physiographic elements of landscapes, the patterns of land use and the settlements within them. Written summaries of the character of each of these areas were published. Nine RCA's fall wholly or partly within the boundaries of the former Alnwick District.

4.5 A process of decision making that builds on this work has come to be known as the *character approach*. It is based on an understanding of landscape character and of the natural, historic and aesthetic factors that in combination create local distinctiveness. This stands in contrast to the more traditional approach, which attempted to identify and put boundaries around those landscapes of the greatest scenic value or natural beauty and then apply more restrictive planning policies within them. At the national level this led to the statutory designation of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. At

a local level, this led to the creation of local designations in Structure Plans and in development plans. In Alnwick these landscapes were termed as Areas of High Landscape Value. No documentation survives, however, to identify how these areas were defined.

4.6 Planning Policy Statement 7, *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas* (PPS7) (published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2004), requires a fundamental reassessment of these local landscape designations. PPS7 recognises that there are areas outside nationally designated areas that are particularly highly valued locally. The Government believes that carefully drafted, criteria based policies in Local Development Documents (LDDs), utilising tools such as landscape character assessment, should provide sufficient protection for these areas, without the need for rigid local designations. It is believed that local landscape designations may unduly restrict acceptable, sustainable development and economic activity that underpins the vitality of rural areas.

4.7 In 2006, Alnwick District Council and Castle Morpeth Borough Council jointly commissioned a Landscape Character Assessment. [This utilised the principles of Landscape Character Assessment as set out in the publication 'Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland' Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage 2002.] This subdivided the landscape into 31 Character Areas, within each of which there is a shared assemblage of characteristics that differentiates that area from other areas. Of these 31 areas, 25 fall wholly or partly within the former Alnwick District.

4.8 No judgements about the relative worth of the landscapes have been made, but the approach does acknowledge that any given landscape area will be represented by some areas in which the underlying landscape character is strongly expressed and the constituent elements are in good condition, and other areas where this is not the case. Landscape quality can be defined in these terms: it is quite distinct from scenic beauty, but it is strongly linked to character. It is essentially an indicator of how clearly that character is expressed, and of how the state of repair of landscape elements contributes to an overall impression of an intact and unified landscape. Landscape quality can be assessed with respect to the following factors:

- the presence or absence of landscape elements which have had some permanence over time, and which are characteristic features of that landscape;
- the presence or absence of relatively recent features which do not reflect the underlying landscape character, and are incongruous in that landscape;
- the condition of landscape features, and the likelihood of their continuing survival as functional landscape elements;
- the extent to which the landscape exhibits a clear and consistent pattern of components resulting from a particular course of historical development;
- the continuity or 'time depth' of the landscape, which is a function of the length of time since the last major change of land use that contributed significantly to current landscape character;
- the extent of survival of semi-natural habitat that is characteristic of the landscape.

4.9 These factors also contribute to landscape sensitivity, along with the landscape's general visibility and its tranquillity. The extent to which any development or other change of land-use would result in erosion of landscape character and loss of quality can be assessed by determining its impact with respect to these basic factors.

4.10 The application of this approach has resulted in the identification of five types of landscape management guideline each associated with a corresponding measure of landscape quality. These are as follows:

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (1)

Proactive conservation of existing character (Very high)

The very high quality of these landscapes generally relates to the survival of either semi-natural habitat e.g. ancient woodland or results from distinctive land management practices that are no longer fully economic e.g. Historic Parkland landscapes. They are often not self-sustaining. Regular practical activity is required to conserve them, and they should be priority areas for the targeting of resources to that end.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (2)

Repair and maintenance of existing character (High)

In most cases the existence of these generally well maintained high quality landscapes has resulted from many years of good custodianship of the land, principally by farmers. There is a danger that changes in the structure of the rural economy could have rapid and serious consequences for landscape quality. Such changes are likely to already be underway or precipitated by future developments in national or international agricultural or forestry support policies. There is a particular need for vigilance in these areas, and for a means of predicting and moderating the impact of changes in land use policy.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (3)

Enhancement of existing character (Moderate)

The enhancement of existing character can include the introduction of new elements/features and/or different management of existing features. These areas typically consist of agricultural landscapes that have suffered some erosion of strength of character and loss of condition of landscape elements. This decline is likely to have stemmed from economic factors, primarily intensification and latterly declining returns. It is unlikely that the condition of traditional features within these landscapes such as hedges and small woodlands will improve without intervention. There is a particular need, therefore, to encourage initiatives such as hedgerow maintenance, habitat creation and tree and woodland planting, to stem the decline in landscape quality that will otherwise become more evident.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (4)

Restoration of existing character (Low)

These are generally areas whose characteristics have suffered decline due to external forces. At one end of the scale there are urban fringe effects around settlements. At the other are the effects of extractive mineral working and other industrial activity, which is visually intrusive during its operational life and can leave either dereliction or over simplified landscape restoration in its wake. These areas have suffered substantial loss of landscape elements that formerly contributed to character and quality. However, enough of the character survives to guide restoration efforts, which require commitment if decline is to be reversed.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (5)

Recreation (Very low)

In these areas there has been a complete loss of character and decline in condition, as a result of the same processes noted in the landscape restoration category but to such a degree that restoration to the pre-development state is no longer practical. These are in some ways the most challenging of landscapes, but they may provide opportunities to innovate and to create new landscapes appropriate to the needs of contemporary society.

Landscape Sensitivity

4.11 Landscape sensitivity is a general indication of the extent to which a landscape can accommodate change without unacceptable detrimental effects on its character. In addition to identifying the five types of landscape management guidelines as they apply to the landscape character areas, the sensitivity of these areas to change have also been identified. The sensitivity to change is likely to vary depending on the type and nature of change being proposed. In these areas it is likely to be appropriate to expect and demand a more rigorous demonstration on the part of developers that proposals are appropriate to the character and quality of the area, in terms of standards of design and selection of building materials, etc. Opportunities for mitigation of impact are likely to be limited in these areas.

Meeting Landscape Policy Objectives

4.12 The detailed policy tests laid out in the policy guideline at paragraph 4.3 are intended to provide an aid to those assessing the impact of development or other change of land use on landscape character and condition. The mapping of landscape quality provides a means of identifying the appropriate landscape policy objective for each area, and the assessment of landscape sensitivity should assist in indicating how easy it will be to mitigate the impacts of development or land use change. Taken together, the maps and the detailed landscape character descriptions will help in determining to what extent a particular development or change of use is appropriate to the landscape in question.

4.13 It should be noted that there is no current proposal flowing from this study to amend any of the policies relating to the statutory designated status of the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It should also be noted that the part of the study area falling within the Northumberland National Park falls outside of the Development Plan area of the former Alnwick District and is also unaffected by this process.

4.14 It should be noted that the mapping subdivisions used throughout the guidance have boundaries that have sometimes been drawn to follow a recognisable feature on the ground. However it is more common to see boundaries between areas of landscape character that are not sharply defined but are gradual transitions. Also, the character of any particular area will be influenced visually by that of surrounding areas and cumulative impacts may also need to be considered. Decisions relating to the location and nature of development should be informed by all of the relevant material in this guidance. It will sometimes be necessary to refer to two or more landscape character descriptions, and to consider the landscape policy objectives for surrounding land. Further, it must be stressed that the division of the landscape into character areas has necessitated a significant degree of simplification. As such the characteristic features of each character area must be seen as applying in general rather than comprehensively. Consequently there will be 'islands' of contrasting quality and character located within all of the character areas and these must be dealt with on their own merits.

5 GENERIC LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

5.1 This section of the SPD presents guidelines which relate to each of the main forces for change in the study area.

BUILT DEVELOPMENT

5.2 The scale, density, massing and siting of buildings and/or other components of a development should relate to the surrounding landscape and take account of significant existing features within or adjacent to the proposed site. Existing field boundaries should be kept intact where possible to preserve landscape scale and the boundary elements themselves including hedgerows, trees and walls retained where possible to provide containment and integrate the site into its setting. Larger scale developments need to be sensitively sited where the scale of the landscape can accommodate them.

5.3 Different approaches may be warranted depending on which landscape management guideline relates to the area the development is located in;

- Landscape Management Guidelines (1): Proactive Conservation of existing character requires an exceptional standard of design, particularly in terms of site selection and site planning to achieve strong integration with the landscape. New development should set out measures to assist the future conservation of the surrounding landscape resource.
- Landscape Management Guidelines (2): Repair and maintenance of existing character requires a high standard of design in response to the existing vernacular. Existing elements of landscape fabric should be retained unless there is good reason not to do so and where necessary repaired.
- Landscape Management Guidelines (3): Enhancement of existing character requires new development to provide the opportunity to enhance landscape character if designed to a high standard. Reference to local building styles and materials remains relevant.
- Landscape Management Guidelines (4): Restoration of existing character requires opportunities to be sought for development to contribute to the restoration of landscape character. The visual impact of development can be mitigated by a well planned setting, incorporating locally appropriate landscape screening and sheltering elements.
- Landscape Management Guidelines (5): Recreation applies where the erosion of landscape character has been so severe that creation of a substantial and bold landscape framework should be a key facet of the enabling infrastructure, both to heal existing visual and environmental scars and to achieve an attractive and marketable setting for the development.

INFRASTRUCTURE: ROADS

5.4 The design of all new roads and road improvements should follow good practice as set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 10, 'Environmental Design and Management'. Under certain landscape management guidelines, the following advice may apply. (<http://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/dmrb/>)

- In areas where Landscape Management Guidelines (1) or (2) apply, planning of road construction or improvements should be carried out to the highest standard and, with sensitivity to the existing landscape and its ongoing management. Standard solutions to roadside infrastructure are unlikely to be acceptable.
- In areas where Landscape Management Guidelines (3) apply opportunities to improve the integration of the road into the adjoining countryside may exist. Improvements to adjacent hedgerows, walls or woodland can make a positive contribution to the preservation of landscape character.
- In areas where Landscape Management Guidelines (4) and (5) apply, road construction or improvement should be seen as part of the catalyst for regeneration and enhancement of the adjoining landscapes. Road corridors can provide an important first impression in these areas and therefore use of bold and attractive landscape treatments can be a key element in renewal strategies.

INFRASTRUCTURE: MOBILE PHONE MASTS

5.5 Sensitive design and siting of masts should be ensured across all areas through the development management process. In terms of landscape character, priorities differ across landscape management guidelines and advice to developers should reflect the following:

- In areas where Landscape Management Guidelines (1) or (2) apply, positioning of standard steel lattice masts should be avoided if at all possible with laminated timber or similar masts preferable. Masts should take account of site specific issues, e.g. In a well wooded area a mast disguised as a tree may be less harmful than a standard mast.
- In areas where Landscape Management Guidelines (3) apply, siting of masts to reduce visual intrusion is the priority. Avoid unnecessary 'skylining' and limit visual impacts upon views from public footpaths, residential areas and public open spaces. Mitigation works such as screen planting should be informed by consideration of landscape character.
- In areas where Landscape Management Guidelines (4) and (5) apply, which are generally areas of poor or very poor existing landscape character there can be a tendency to give less consideration to visual impact. The result can be a cumulative negative effect and can constrain efforts to regenerate the area. The basic principles of good siting should therefore still apply.

INFRASTRUCTURE: WIND TURBINES

5.6 Modern, commercial wind turbines are very large structures. Visual influence of wind farms is therefore potentially significant across long distances and there can be a widespread influence on landscape character.

5.7 The acceptability or otherwise of a wind farm should be based on a comprehensive and systematic landscape and visual assessment of the specific proposals undertaken in accordance with the latest industry best practice. It should be demonstrated as part of the EIA process that both site selection and layout design have been optimised.

5.8 In relation to each of the landscape management guidelines the following comments apply:

- In areas covered by Landscape Management Guidelines (1) and (2) landscape character is threatened due to the demise of traditional landscape management practices which are no longer economically viable, the investment in the local landscape that wind farm development can bring (e.g. as an annual levy on each megawatt of installed power) may be beneficial, provided the integrity of the site would not be adversely affected.
- Similarly, in areas covered by Landscape Management Guidelines (3) which are landscapes that have declined in quality due to reduced investment or intensification of farming, there will be scope for improvements to landscape character through new investment directed at landscape management.
- In areas covered by Landscape Management Guidelines (4) and (5), wind energy development could complement innovative regeneration strategies that aim to create new dynamic landscapes.

5.9 In all cases, the specific landscape management measures that are proposed as part of the development, and the mechanisms that will be put in place to bring them about should be clearly set out alongside development proposals. This could include details of specific measures to be undertaken on the wind farm site itself as part of the development and/or the establishment of a community fund, some or all of which is ring-fenced for certain types of landscape investment within a set distance from the site

Ancillary Development

5.10 Wind energy development also introduces ancillary components to the landscape including substations, control buildings, access tracks and electricity connections. These may themselves give rise to landscape effects. The nature of these effects and the measures taken to mitigate them will vary according to the landscape management guidelines, with built elements needing to accord with the guidance provided above, and with equivalent degrees of care being required in relation to integration of access tracks and cabling.

INFRASTRUCTURE: BIOMASS CROPS

5.11 Significant expansion of the area of land used for growing biomass crops has been identified as a possible force for change in the study area. The planting of energy crops is not an operation requiring planning consent, but its most likely manifestation in Northumberland - short rotation coppice (SRC) falls within the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations for forestry, and as such consent from the Forestry Commission is required. Other crops, such as Miscanthus - a tall grass, may not be viable this far north. In terms of landscape character, the key issues are that the crops grow tall (up to seven or eight metres), which may impede or alter views and that they will appear different to traditional crops.

5.12 The Forestry Commission has published a useful guide to Short Rotation Coppice in the Landscape (FCGNZ, 2001).

5.13 In relation to the landscape management guidelines, it is more likely that SRC will constitute a harmful change in land use in areas that fall within landscape management guidelines 1 and 2, where in general the high quality landscape has been formed as a result of land-uses that have very different characteristics to SRC. Landscape management guidelines 3 includes extensive areas of lowland mixed farmland which may be able to absorb biomass crops without significant harm to landscape character. In landscape management guidelines 4 and 5, there is potential for use of SRC as a component of regeneration strategies for under-used or despoiled land.

MINERAL EXTRACTION

5.14 Any new applications for large-scale mineral extraction will be subject to environmental impact assessment, which will address amongst other things the landscape impact of the proposals. Restoration plans should take account of the specific characteristics of the surrounding landscape and be informed by a detailed landscape character assessment of the area affected.

AGRICULTURE

5.15 Much of the change that could take place within the farming sectors falls outside the planning system. Where development is proposed as part of either intensification (e.g. large new barns) or diversification (e.g. conversion of buildings for tourism or light industry) planning controls are in place to ensure their appropriateness.

5.16 National government initiatives such as the Agricultural Change and Environmental Observatory Programme (2005) have been put in place in recognition of the uncertainty that major structural change has created and with a view to identifying detrimental patterns at an early stage. Certain safeguards have also been put in place. Under the new single payment regime, farmers have to manage land in what is termed 'Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition'. This should help to avoid abandonment of land.

5.17 A number of agri-environment schemes are in place which should enable farmers to attract income in return for undertaking environmental work - including operations that maintain or improve landscape improvements, protection and enhancement of nature conservation, historic buildings and features, access and interpretation opportunities.

TOURISM AND RECREATION

5.18 It is in the interest of the whole tourism industry that landscape character is protected and enhanced across the study area. The majority of new tourism development is subject to the formal development management process and generally must accord with the policies set out in the local development framework. Particular consideration should be given to safeguarding landscape quality and scenic interest, as this is so central to what tourists in Northumberland are expecting to see

5.19 Access roads, areas of hard standing and the landscape settings of large tourist developments should be considered as an integral part of their design, with the objective of fitting the development into the landscape and minimising its impacts upon the local area.

Improving existing campsites/caravan park facilities

5.20 Steps should be taken to encourage the inclusion of screening, with either landform or tree and shrub planting to integrate existing facilities such as camping, caravan and chalet developments into the landscape, particularly on the coast or on elevated ground where they can be intrusive.

New campsites/caravan parks

5.21 New tourism facilities, for example on farms that are seeking to diversify, should be located and designed in such a way as to minimise their visual intrusion in the landscape. Naturally screened locations are preferable and sites should be integrated into the landscape using existing and new planting.

SIGNAGE

5.22 In order to preserve local distinctiveness, care should be taken in designing new signage to avoid standardised solutions, instead selecting materials such as local stone or adopting existing local styles of sign writing where they exist.

CAR PARKS

5.23 Car parks in rural settings should be designed and constructed so as to minimise their visibility and impact. The use of unbound surfacing materials is preferable to urban style asphalt and white line markings. Screening of vehicles behind existing or new vegetation should be balanced with personal safety and security considerations.

TREES, FORESTS AND WOODLAND

5.24 The Forestry Commission publishes guidelines for the design of forest landscapes. The following generic guidelines identify ways in which forests and woodlands can make a positive contribution to landscape character.

New Woodlands

5.25 The availability of grant assistance for planting and establishment of woodlands, coupled with declining agricultural incomes and fragmentation of farm units means that the planting of farmland to create new woodlands is becoming a viable and attractive proposition. In assessing a landscape's suitability to accommodate woodland, landscape scale should be taken into account. Care should be taken not to mask distinctive local landscape features, such as dramatic skylines or historic field patterns. Also, there are areas that are currently distinguished by a lack of tree cover and where tree planting may reduce local identity and harm sense of place.

5.26 Other considerations in the design of new woodlands include having regard to the settings of sites of historic or archaeological importance, watercourses and rights of way. New planting should reflect the type of woodland that would have naturally existed in the area and margins of planting should be designed to suit the local topography and landscape grain rather than the extents of land ownership.

Commercial forest restructuring

5.27 It is widely recognised that many commercial conifer plantations are unsympathetic to the landscape. This can be addressed by increasing diversity of species and age structure and through selective clearance from around distinctive topography or important archaeological sites. The Forestry Commission has Forest Design Plans for all of its major forests and influences the management of privately owned estates through its operation of both the felling licence system and the planting grant schemes.

Native woodland management and planting

5.28 Existing broadleaf woodlands and copses should be conserved and managed and where appropriate use traditional management techniques such as coppicing. Preparation of a management plan for each wood would be encouraged.

5.29 In relation to landscape management guidelines, it is more likely that introduction of new woodland planting will constitute a harmful change in land use within landscape management guidelines 1 and 2, where in general the high quality landscape has been formed as a result of land-uses that exhibit very different characteristics. However, there will be exceptions to this – for instance the introduction of new native woodland in the Northumberland National Park is actively promoted. Landscape Management Guidelines 3 includes extensive areas of lowland mixed farmland within which native woodland planting would generally be beneficial to landscape character. In landscape management guidelines 4 and 5, there is potential for the extensive use of forestry as a component of regeneration strategies for under-used or despoiled land.

6 THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA DESCRIPTIONS

6.1 The 25 Landscape Character Areas within former Alnwick District are listed below. Some of these sites fall 'partly' within the study area and partly within the former Castle Morpeth District. Character areas 21 and 24-28 fall wholly within the former Castle Morpeth District.

1. Character Area 1 Beadnell Bay to Howick
2. Character Area 2 Howick to Seaton Point
3. Character Area 3 Seaton Point to Coquet Estuary
4. Character Area 4 Druridge Bay
5. Character Area 5 Coastal Coalfields (partly)
6. Character Area 6 North East Farmed Coastal Plain
7. Character Area 7 Lower Aln Valley
8. Character Area 8 Whittingham Vale
9. Character Area 9 Beanley Moor
10. Character Area 10 Breamish Vale
11. Character Area 11 Charlton Ridge
12. Character Area 12 Alnwick Moor
13. Character Area 13 Rothbury Forest
14. Character Area 14 Harwood Forest
15. Character Area 15 Upper Coquet
16. Character Area 16 Coquet Dale
17. Character Area 17 Coquet Valley
18. Character Area 18 Longframlington / Shilbottle Rolling Farmland
19. Character Area 19 Wingates Ridge (partly)
20. Character Area 20 Longwitton (partly)
21. Character Area 21 *former Castle Morpeth District*
22. Character Area 22 Longhorsley Rolling Farmland (partly)
23. Character Area 23 Font and Wansbeck Valleys (partly)
24. Character Area 24 *former Castle Morpeth District*
25. Character Area 25 *former Castle Morpeth District*
26. Character Area 26 *former Castle Morpeth District*
27. Character Area 27 *former Castle Morpeth District*
28. Character Area 28 *former Castle Morpeth District*
29. Character Area 29 Elsdon Valley (partly)

6.2 Each character area is described in turn within this section of the SPD. The geographical extents of these Character Areas are shown on figure one.

Character Area 1	Beadnell Bay to Howick	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (1)
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View south to Dunstanburgh Castle from Dunstan Steads

Key Characteristics:

- Expansive sea and coastal views
- The prominent landmark of Dunstanburgh castle on Whin Sill outcrop
- Medieval field patterns
- Rich and diverse ecological interest (principally coastal) and geological interest

General Description:

6.3 An attractive landscape of sandy bays and rocky coves, separated by rocky headlands, backed by dune systems. A distinctive ridge of Whin Sill runs parallel to the coast near Craster and Low Newton creating a series of vertical cliff faces facing the gentle inland pastures. Tree and woodland cover is generally sparse. Adjoining farmland is mainly mixed arable/pasture with relatively small-scale field units and very irregular field boundaries, particularly in the northern part of the character area indicate medieval origins. Ridge and furrow can be seen at High Newton and Newton Links. A typical medieval village plan survives at Newton by the Sea. Generally the settlement pattern is one of dispersed farmsteads and a number of small nucleated coastal and fishing villages such as Craster. The relationship with the sea and the presence of striking vistas to coastal landmarks - particularly Dunstanburgh Castle, make this a landscape whose outlook exceeds its small geographical footprint.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Built Development 3.21
- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Tourism and Recreation 3.26
- Historic Landscapes 3.27

Landscape Designations:

6.4 The whole of the character area is located within the Northumberland Coast AONB and defined Heritage Coast.

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.5 Landscape Management Guidelines (1): Proactive Conservation of existing character should be applied to this character area. The principal aims of landscape planning policies and initiatives should be to identify and enable land-uses that will continue to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the landscape. The landscape should be managed to conserve and enhance both natural and cultural heritage with good management of recreational pressures and preservation of the open sea and coastal views.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.6 Built Development/Infrastructure: All planning applications should be rigorously assessed for their landscape and visual impacts, both individually and cumulatively highly visible development such as masts, pylons and wind farms should generally be discouraged where they would have a visual impact on the landscape.

6.7 New development should set out measures to assist the future conservation and enhancement of the surrounding landscape resource.

6.8 The dramatic open coastal vistas should be conserved.

6.9 Land management: The reintroduction of traditional less intensive agricultural stewardship and the retention, restoration, and reinstatement of historic field boundaries are encouraged in this area. The dramatic open coastal vistas should be conserved. Existing medieval field patterns should be preserved where possible and boundaries that are documented but have been removed, should be restored where the opportunity exists. Improved awareness and interpretation of the cultural significance of everyday landscape features e.g. reversed S field boundaries and ridge and furrow earthworks would be beneficial both to land managers and visitors.

6.10 Trees, Forests and Woodland: This is a landscape that would in general not benefit from significant new tree planting.

Character Area 2	Howick to Seaton Point	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (1) and (3)
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View south across fields to the north of RAF Boulmer

Key Characteristics:

- Rocky shore with cliffs and reefs
- Open farmed coastal plain with gappy hedgerows
- Military infrastructure and security measures around RAF Boulmer
- Rich and diverse ecologically (principally coastal) and geological interest.

General Description:

6.11 An attractive rugged shoreline of rocky coves, cliffs, wave cut platforms and stone reefs. Inland of the shore estate artefacts and buildings (around Howick) and military infrastructure (at RAF Boulmer) exert a strong influence on the local landscape. Settlement pattern consists of small coastal villages and independent farmsteads sheltered with groups of trees. Relatively open grassland expanses are evident and principally consist of grazed pasture although there is also a large expanse of mown grass within the airfield boundary. Hedgerows are often gappy with wire fences and tree cover is generally sparse, although some small woodland blocks are present. In particular the woodland around Howick Hall provides a sense of local enclosure. Shoreline is relatively isolated - access to and views of the coast are less evident than further north and south, due to the rocky character of the coast.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Built Development 3.21
- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Tourism and Recreation 3.26
- Historic Landscapes 3.27

Landscape Designations:

The whole of the character area is located within the Northumberland Coast AONB and defined Heritage Coast.

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.12 Landscape Management Guidelines (1): Proactive conservation of existing character and Landscape Management Guidelines (3): Enhancement of existing character should be applied to this character area. The principal aims of landscape planning policies and initiatives should be to arrest the erosion of character and loss of condition of some landscape elements such as hedgerows that has occurred and in so doing continue to conserve and enhance the general quality of the landscape.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.13 Built Development/Infrastructure: Any plans to redevelop RAF Boulmer could present a significant opportunity to incorporate measures to conserve and enhance the landscape character, including the introduction of appropriate new elements or features. All planning applications should be rigorously assessed for their landscape and visual impacts, both individually and cumulatively.

6.14 Land management: Encourage environmental management of marginal agricultural land.

6.15 Trees, Forests and Woodland: inland, promote hedgerow planting and enhancement work and planting of new native woodland.

6.16 Historic Landscape: There are some valuable elements of historic landscape fabric associated with the Howick Estate that should be preserved.

Character Area 3	Seaton Point to Coquet Estuary	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (1) and (3)
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View across the Aln estuary to Church Hill from Alnmouth

Key Characteristics:

- Distinctive, historic settlements of Alnmouth and Warkworth
- Rich range of natural habitats including Rivers Aln and Coquet, estuaries, salt marsh and dunes.
- Sweeping coastal views

General Description:

6.17 This character area comprises the coastal strip that lies between the tidal estuaries of the River Aln and River Coquet. Sweeping sandy beaches are backed by well-developed dune systems and rolling open arable fields. Tree cover is very sparse. The dunes near Alnmouth have been developed as a ‘links’ golf course. Both estuaries feature well preserved dune and saltmarsh systems. Alnmouth developed as an import/export town for grain during the 16th and 17th centuries to supplement the fishing trade, it is now a local centre for tourism and leisure boating. The inland boundary of the character area is the elevated A1068 coast road, from which expansive views over the landscape to the sea can be enjoyed. The area is adjacent to the East Coast main Railway Line.

6.18 The settlements of Alnmouth and Warkworth, which are both outstanding in terms of architectural and historical distinctiveness, are clearly popular and experience visitor pressure during the summer months.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Built Development 3.21
- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Tourism and Recreation 3.26
- Historic Landscapes 3.27

Landscape Designations:

6.19 The whole of the character area is located within the Northumberland Coast AONB and defined Heritage Coast.

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.20 Landscape Management Guidelines (1): Proactive conservation of existing character and Landscape Management Guidelines (3): Enhancement of existing character should be applied to this character area. The principal aims of landscape planning policies and initiatives should be to identify and enable land-uses that will continue to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the landscape.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.21 Built Development/Infrastructure: All planning applications should be rigorously assessed for their landscape and visual impacts, both individually and cumulatively. Highly visible built development, including masts, pylons and wind farms should generally be discouraged where they would have a visual impact on the landscape. New development should set out measures to assist the future conservation and enhancement of the surrounding landscape resource.

6.22 Land Management: Encourage environmental management of marginal agricultural land. Actively retreat the farmed margins of the dune systems inland to allow a more natural edge to develop.

6.23 Trees, Forests and Woodland: Promote hedgerow and woodland planting on the upper slopes alongside the A1068.

6.24 Tourism and Recreation: Encourage environmental management of golf course. Encourage screening/landscaping of caravan sites.

Character Area 4	Druridge Bay	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (3) and (4)
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Looking south along the beach from a car park near Cresswell, a dramatic view despite the presence of exposed outfall pipes, unkempt vegetation and distant industrial chimneys

Key Characteristics:

- Wide sweeping sandy bay backed by dunes
- Sharp transition with heavily modified low lying coastal plain
- Emerging leisure land uses
- Industrial and mining infrastructure
- Ecologically rich, despite, and in some cases because of, industrial activity

General Description:

6.25 An attractive almost unbroken sweep of sandy beach and mature sand dunes is backed by a variety of natural man-made lakes and wetlands, and arable land, all of which owe their origins to the long history of mining and industrial activity in the area. The character area stretches from Amble, a significant coastal settlement and further south are the smelter works, power station and colliery at Lynemouth. Only a small proportion of the character area is within the former Alnwick District (the stretch from Amble to Hadston Carrs). In this northern part of the character area the legacy of former industry, particularly opencast mining, is a simplified landscape of reclamation, creating relatively featureless agricultural land with medium to large scale fields in places enhanced by subsidence wetlands. There are views out to Coquet Island along the coastal edge.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Built Development 3.21
- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Tourism and Recreation 3.26
- Historic Landscapes 3.27

Landscape Designations:

6.26 This area is covered partly by the defined Northumberland Heritage Coast.

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.27 Landscape Management Guidelines (3): Enhancement of existing character and (4): Restoration of existing character should be applied to this character area. The principal aims of landscape planning policies and initiatives should be to continue to restore and enhance the landscape character of the area through active environment management practices, supported by appropriate access management measures.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.28 Built Development/Infrastructure: Rationalisation, improved design, maintenance and enhancement of existing facilities such as car parks are required in order to reduce landscape and visual impacts in the area. Opportunities should be sought for development to contribute to the restoration of landscape character in the area.

6.29 Land management: Ongoing coastal dune management is required and in particular dune vegetation would in places benefit from proactive management to eradicate invasive species e.g. Ragwort.

6.30 Trees, Forests and Woodland: Encourage further development of patterns of enclosure including hedgerows and active management of existing hedgerows, including the planting of new broad leaved woodland.

Character Area 5	Coastal Coalfields	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (5)
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Large arable field units with gappy hedgerows south of Linton

Key Characteristics:

- Low lying coastal plain, generally open and expansive
- Mining towns and villages in often heavily modified rural landscape setting
- Large scale open cast mine sites
- Distinctively simple landscapes on restored former open cast sites
- Pylons, chimneys and industry, East Coast main railway line prominent

General Description:

6.31 Only a small proportion, in the north, of this character area lies within Alnwick District. Character Area 5 is an extensive, relatively flat coastal plain whose appearance has been heavily modified by industrial activity. This is principally a consequence of the geology of the area, with coal seams that have been exploited by both open cast and deep mining methods. Although the closure of the last deep mine, at Ellington, was announced in 2005, the majority of the mines are now long gone, along with their distinctive pithead buildings, spoil heaps and degraded land. Restoration has generally resulted in oversimplified medium to large scale, geometric landscapes of pasture and conifer blocks, which are relatively open and lack distinctive features. Open cast mining operations are ongoing at a small number of large sites. Despite general heavy modification of this landscape, fragments of ancient woodland remain, and many of the older village centres feature attractive honey coloured sandstone buildings. Land cover consists of mixed farming, predominantly arable. Hedgerows are often gappy and dysfunctional. Deciduous tree cover is restricted to occasional mature hedgerow trees and small copses.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Built Development 3.21
- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Mineral Extraction 3.23
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.32 Landscape Management Guidelines (5): Recreation should be applied to this character area. The principle aim of landscape planning policies and initiatives should be to shape and create a new appropriately functioning landscape framework in this area as the erosion of landscape character by industry has been so severe that replication of previous patterns or elements would be somewhat futile.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.33 Built Development: New development provides the opportunity to create a bold and substantial landscape framework. There are a number of major industrial sites with redevelopment potential. Here and elsewhere, a strategic approach to renewal is recommended, through the preparation of wide reaching development briefs.

6.34 Trees, Forests and Woodland: An extensive wooded structure is envisaged, created by extensive planting of a mixture of permanent native woodland and rotational biomass coppice crops. This woodland would form a spatial structure for mixed-use development, provide a recreational resource and link up the remaining fragments of ancient woodland. More recent conifer plantations would be absorbed and where necessary diversified.

Character Area 6	North East Farmed Coastal Plain	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (1) and (4)
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View west over arable fields divided by hedgerows in acute decline to the south of Longhoughton

Key Characteristics:

- Open, gently undulating mixed arable farmland with occasional small woodlands and shelterbelts
- Dispersed farmsteads and compact villages
- Relatively large fields with weak enclosure

General Description:

6.35 This is an intensively farmed landscape of predominantly open, mixed arable land with limited tree and woodland cover. Farms are typically large with a rectilinear enclosure pattern defined by gappy, close cropped hedgerows with wire fences. Grey sandstone walls provide local variation. A more wooded and intimate enclosed landscape is experienced locally around Embleton and the Howick estate. The A1 and the east coast mainline railway run through this character area, roughly parallel to the coast although these are not prominent due to screening landform and vegetation. Topography slopes gradually from west to east and the area enjoys views to both the sea and the fell sandstone uplands. Occasional but distinctive mature shelterbelts of beech or pine are important local features in this open landscape. The settlement pattern consists of mainly dispersed farmsteads and small nucleated settlements such as Longhoughton, Embelton, North Charlton and Rennington.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Built Development 3.21
- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Tourism and Recreation 3.26

Landscape Designations:

6.36 Eastern fringes are within the Northumberland Coast AONB and defined Heritage Coast.

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.37 Landscape Management Guidelines (1): Proactive conservation and (4) Restoration of existing character should be applied to this area. The principle aim of landscape planning policies and initiatives is to encourage improved custodianship of a landscape that has declined in quality as a result of agricultural intensification.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.38 Land Management: Improved restoration and management of existing landscape features, particularly hedgerows, walls, woodlands, watercourses and wetlands would have landscape and ecological benefits. The distinctive mature beech and pine shelterbelts found in this area generally consist of single age stock which will have a finite lifespan. Re-planting with native species is encouraged so that a succession can be achieved. In parallel with the above mentioned restoration of landscape features, farmers are encouraged to increase widths of field margins and to incorporate buffer strips managed primarily for nature conservation along water courses.

Character Area 7	Lower Aln Valley	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (2)
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View north across the Aln valley from north of Bilton

Key Characteristics:

- Enclosed and often small scale landscape due to incised valley
- Broadly meandering river Aln.
- Adjacent, historic settlement of Alnwick with prominent castle and the walled grounds of Hulne Park

General Description:

6.39 This is a fertile valley landscape with human influences dating back to pre-historic times. The landscape is influenced by the extensive ownership of the Duke of Northumberland including the distinctive townscape of Alnwick and Alnwick castle, both of which stand on rising ground to the south of the river. The wider estate influence includes both the extensive walled grounds of Hulne Park and large tracts of farmland with estate farms and villages such as Denwick. Hulne Park includes parkland designed in part by Capability Brown, as well as woodland and heather moorland at higher elevations. From the outside, the miles of tall stone walled enclosure around Hulne Park are a highly visible statement of the control exerted by the estate over the land and are both a dominant and a distinctive feature. Further to the east beyond the A1 and recently developed area, the broad and gently sloping valley is predominantly cultivated for arable crops, with some significant blocks of deciduous woodland and hedgerow trees, but with an evident decline in the integrity of hedgerows. The Eastern part of this area is intersected by several elements of key infrastructure including some of the main transport routes through the area, electricity pylons and the East Coast mainline railway.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Built Development 3.21
- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Tourism and Recreation 3.26
- Historic Landscapes 3.27

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.40 Landscape Management Guidelines (2): Repair and maintenance of existing character should be applied to this area. The principal aims of landscape planning policies and initiatives should be to encourage continued good custodianship of a landscape that is generally well-preserved and in good condition. The exception to this is the agricultural landscape to the east, where there has been some loss of landscape quality and improved land management is required.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.41 Land Management: West of the A1, the existing custodianship seems to be positive in landscape terms and there is no apparent need for major change.

6.42 To the east of the A1 intensive farming methods have in places reduced the opportunities for wildlife to co-exist with agriculture. Improved management of existing landscape features, particularly hedgerows, but also woodlands, watercourses and wetlands would have landscape and ecological benefits. In parallel with the restoration of landscape features, landowners should be encouraged to increase widths of field margins and to incorporate buffer strips managed primarily for nature conservation.

Character Area 8	Whittingham Vale	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (3)
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Silage being taken from improved grassland west of Whittingham

Key Characteristics:

- Broad undulating valley of the River Aln and its tributaries.
- Significant influence of glacial deposition
- Strong enclosure pattern, made up of hedgerows and hedgerow trees albeit in decline in parts

General Description:

6.43 A quiet, gently undulating broad valley landscape of medium scale with features of glacial deposition. Dominated by a patchwork of arable crops and pasture but with localised parkland influences, the land is generally enclosed by a strong pattern of hedgerows with hedgerow trees, although in many areas this is becoming weak as hedgerows are removed or become dysfunctional. The village of Whittingham is located at a fording point of the River Aln, which follows a meandering course from west to east across the character area. At a macro-scale the area is bounded by higher ground to east and west by the Northumberland sandstone ridge and Cheviot uplands respectively. Small woodlands are frequent, many of which are blocks of coniferous farm plantations. The settlement pattern is one of frequent scattered farmsteads and a few historic villages.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Tourism and Recreation 3.26

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.44 Landscape Management Guidelines (3): Enhancement of existing character should be applied to this character area. The underlying aim here should be to preserve the existing diversity of land use and at the same time reverse the current decline in landscape quality, with particular regard to hedgerows.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.45 Land management: Landowners should be encouraged to restore and improve management of existing hedgerows and woodlands through agri-environment funding schemes. There is also scope for planting new native woodlands and naturalising watercourses through introduction of lower intensity land uses such as unmanaged grassland and woodland. This should be undertaken in sympathy with the local conditions, using suitable species (ideally of local provenance) and local techniques where relevant e.g. hedge laying. New woodlands should be designed with reference to the appropriate native woodland zone and the national vegetation classification.

Character Area 9	Beanley Moor	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (3)
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View north along the western edge of Beanley plantation

Key Characteristics:

- Farmed, complex, strongly undulating, land above the Aln valley of varying scale and elevation
- Some coniferous forestry
- Some heather moorland with bracken encroachment on the higher elevations
- Ancient settlement evidence on the moorland

General Description:

6.46 This character area consists of Beanley Moor and a narrow strip of land to its south west. The southern part of the character area is distinguished by a series of distinctive hills and the northern extent has a stringer moorland character. Overall, elevated and undulating, land use is dominated by farming – a mixture of arable and pasture divided by a pattern of hedgerows, shelterbelts and stone walls giving way to heather or forestry at the summits or where slopes are steep. There is much surviving of prehistoric sites and early settlement on the moorland. Minor roads provide access to scattered farmsteads and two small villages of Glanton and Eglington. There are long distance views along the sandstone ridge to the east and north. This landscape is contiguous with the higher ground of the Cheviots and the National Park to the west beyond the district boundary. There are small scale parkland landscapes at Hedgeley and Shawdon Halls.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Built Development 3.21
- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Historic Landscapes 3.27

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.47 Landscape Management Guidelines (3): Enhancement of existing character should be applied to this character area. The underlying aim should be to reverse the current decline in landscape quality by reversing the current gradual decline in landscape fabric such as hedgerows and woodlands.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.48 Land management: The restoration and improved management of hedgerows and existing woodlands should be undertaken in sympathy with the local conditions, using suitable species (ideally of local provenance) and local techniques where relevant e.g. hedge laying. New woodlands should be designed with reference to the appropriate native woodland zone and the national vegetation classification.

6.49 Bracken management needs to take into account the potential presence of native woodland ground flora of which bracken is a natural component. Overall there is a need to maintain and restore heather moorland.

6.50 Historic Landscape: There is a need for ongoing management and protection of archaeology and historic features to limit damage from visitors, forestry and farming.

Character Area 10	Breamish Vale	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (2)
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The River Breamish flowing west away from the A697 north of Powburn

Key Characteristics:

- Meandering river Breamish and floodplain within broad valley landscape
- Distinct lowland break between the Cheviots to the west and the sandstone uplands to the east
- Mixed farmland

General Description:

6.51 A broad undulating valley which forms part of a belt of lowland wrapping around the Cheviots and separating them from the Northumberland sandstone hills to the east. The floodplain generally consists of a fertile, tranquil agricultural landscape of mixed farmland. Landscape elements are relatively well maintained and intact. The valley floor is quite well wooded resulting in a relatively small and intimate landscape scale. Tree cover is a mixture of small scale woods, shelterbelts and individual mature trees as well as a fragment of ancient woodland at the east end of the character area. The meandering nature of this part of the river has formed a strong pattern of erosion and deposition. Localised sand and gravel extraction from the valley floor is ongoing. Settlement in this area is limited to a number of historic halls and associated farmsteads.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Minerals Extraction 3.23
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.52 Landscape Management Guidelines (2): Repair and maintenance of existing character should be applied to this character area. The principal aims of landscape planning policies and initiatives should be to encourage continued good custodianship of a landscape that is generally well-maintained and in good condition.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.53 Land management: In terms of change, there may be scope to increase the 'naturalness' of the river corridor, by retreating field margins from its banks and providing a wider habitat corridor along the already bio diverse Breamish, which forms part of the River Tweed SSSI and supports amongst other things Otter, Lamprey, Water Crowfoot and Salmon. Such a strategy would be beneficial to not only the wildlife but also to the hydrology of the river generally and its ability to withstand erosion at times of peak flow. In the wider valley floor, proactive management of existing landscape features, particularly woodlands, would have landscape and ecological benefits. New woodlands should be designed with reference to the appropriate native woodland zone and the national vegetation classification.

Character Area 11	Charlton Ridge	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (3)
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Stone walls alongside the B6347 near South Charlton

Key Characteristics:

- Open large scale upland sandstone ridge, which becomes more complex and smaller scale undulating landform in the south east.
- Moorland and rough pasture with little enclosure
- Simple composition fragmented by blocky coniferous plantations

General Description:

6.54 A large tract of open upland landscape. Although plateau like, the landform is never flat. It is gently rolling at the north west and becomes more dramatically undulating towards the south east where there is an accompanying reduction in landscape scale. Predominant land use is extensive pasture grazed by sheep and cattle. Enclosure is infrequent and often consists only of wire fences. Consequently the landscape is very open, broken up only by numerous, relatively small and generally rectilinear conifer plantations. The area is crossed by a small number of single track roads and footpaths. The influence of woodland near Alnwick gives an increasing sense of enclosure. Settlement within this landscape is limited to scattered farmsteads. There are long distance views across to the Cheviot Hills in the west.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.55 Landscape Management Guidelines (3): Enhancement of existing character should be applied to this character area. The quality of this landscape has been compromised by two principle forces, these being conifer planting and agricultural intensification and landscape policies and initiatives should seek to enhance existing character either through the introduction of appropriate new elements/features and/or different management of the existing landscape features.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.56 Trees, Forests and Woodland: Removal of some conifer plantations is envisaged; particularly the smaller blocky plantings that fragment the landscape and any that are poorly related to landform. Other plantations could be wholly or partially replanted with broad leaved species or extended/reduced to achieve a more sympathetic outline. The overall aim of this restructuring of forestry would be to arrive at a simplified composition of elements. Guidance should be sought from the Forestry Commission in respect of felling and restocking of plantations, both in terms of a strategic view of which blocks should remain, the detailed design and technical aspects, and the potential presence of protected species. Felling is currently uneconomic, so the range of agri-environmental funding mechanisms would need to be explored to find an appropriate incentive to the landowner.

6.57 Land Management: Restoration of the diversity of semi natural moorland vegetation should be addressed through appropriate management regimes.

6.58 Historic Landscape: There is a need for ongoing management and protection of archaeology and historic features to limit damage for visitors, forestry and farming.

Character Area 12	Alnwick Moor	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (3)
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Looking north west across Alnwick Moor along an unclassified road north of the B6341

Key Characteristics:

- East facing slope of upland sandstone ridge
- Open expansive landscape of semi-improved grassland, heather moorland and bracken
- Stone walls and wire fences – few hedges or trees
- Prominent communications infrastructure

General Description:

6.59 This character area consists of part of the east facing flank of the prominent north south sandstone ridge that runs through the study area. Uninterrupted views across the coastal plain towards the North Sea are possible due to the relatively steep gradient and general openness of landscape which is largely devoid of trees. Semi-improved pasture with managed hedgerows on the lower slopes gradually gives way to heather moorland with increasing elevation. On the upper slopes, the scale of enclosure increases and walls and fences dominate. A geodesic dome radar station and a military communications mast are prominent landmarks. Urban fringe land-uses, including ‘horticulture’ are evident in parts. To the south, there are a number of small scale conifer plantations. A large conifer plantation south of the B6341 Alnwick to Rothbury road is visible on the skyline at the east of the character area. The settlement pattern consists of individual isolated farmsteads.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.60 Landscape Management Guidelines (3): Enhancement of existing character should be applied to this character area. The quality of this landscape has been compromised by a number of influences, these being a lack of management of landscape elements – particularly boundaries, the unsympathetic planting of conifers at the summit of the ridge and urban fringe land-uses. Landscape policies and initiatives should seek to enhance existing character either through the introduction of appropriate new elements/features and/or different management of the existing landscape features.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.61 Trees, Forests and Woodland: Removal of some conifer plantations would be beneficial; particularly the smaller blocky plantings that fragment replanted or supplemented with broad leaved species.

6.62 Land management: Management of the moorland vegetation should aim to expand heather cover in favour of the semi-improved grassland and to reduce bracken encroachment. Restoration of the diversity of semi natural moorland vegetation should be addressed through appropriate management techniques. Conservation and restoration of landscape features such as dry stone walls should also be encouraged.

Character Area 13	Rothbury Forest	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (3)
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View towards south west from B6341 at Corby's Craggs

Key Characteristics:

- Broad open upland ridge complex
- Craggy cliffs form occasional prominent landmarks
- Landcover is extensive semi improved grassland and heather moorland with substantial conifer plantations

General Description:

6.63 This character area is diverse and contains three main parts: the upland moorland, the rocky outcrops of Corby Craggs and Thrunton Wood Craggs, and the steep sided craggs north of Rothbury and at Craggside which form distinct features within the Coquet Valley. This is an extensive broad upland ridge complex incorporating extensive moorland and conifer plantations. Land cover is predominantly moorland, this consisting of both semi-improved grassland and heather. Moorland is extensively grazed, with infrequent wire fences providing enclosure. Encroachment by gorse and bracken is evident. Damp grassland is flushed with rushes. The resultant visual effect is that the terrain is relatively diverse in texture. Landscape scale is large, with long distance views frequent. There are a number of large coniferous plantations, the largest being Thrunton Wood. Forest margins are often geometric in nature and unsympathetic to landform or scale. Sandstone outcrops form prominent craggs, including at Corby's craggs and on Callaly Moor. There is a wealth of prehistoric remains including cairnfields, cup and ring marks and remains of settlements. Later historic interest includes evidence of small scale coal mining at Alnwick Moor, historic parkland at Callaly castle and Craggside which is now managed by the National Trust.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Tourism and Recreation 3.26
- Historic Landscapes 3.27

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.64 Landscape Management Guidelines (3): Enhancement of existing character should be applied to this character area. The quality of this landscape has been compromised by a number of influences, the principal factors being the unsympathetic planting of conifers and a decline in the management of moorland that has led to encroachment of gorse and bracken. Landscape policies and initiatives should seek to enhance existing character either through the introduction of appropriate new elements/features and/or different management of the existing landscape features.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.65 Trees, Forests and Woodland: Landscape policies and initiatives should support the restructuring of some or all of the forested areas, in line with agreed Forestry commission design plans. These will break up geometric planting patterns, open up the settings of archaeological features and watercourses and introduce greater diversity of forest types and habitats. Restoration of the diversity of semi natural moorland vegetation should be addressed through appropriate management techniques.

Character Area 14	Harwood Forest	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (3)
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View west along the southern edge of the Harwood Forest plantation

Key Characteristics:

- Expansive upland with some distinctive rock outcrops
- Large scale, geometrically laid out coniferous plantation dominates the centre
- Extensive moorland - both semi-improved grassland fringe around the forest core and areas of heather

General Description:

6.66 An extensive large scale unenclosed upland landscape that is physically divided by a vast conifer plantation. To the north and west of the plantation, broad plateau summits undulate in a series of ridges with northwest facing scarp slopes. Sandstone boulders and craggy outcrops break through the surface in many places and in places form distinctive landmarks visible from great distances. Thin sandy soils support a semi-natural heather moorland and acid grassland with some areas of wet mire. The upper slopes of the hills provide semi-improved grazing, which in place has reverted back to rough pasture.

6.67 Lower slopes to the east provide improved grazing with woodland cover along stream courses. The Simonside Hills SSSI includes fine examples of heathland vegetation and several rare species. Also important are the damper areas of 'flush' and mires, with purple moor grass, bog myrtle and sphagnum moss. Dry stone walls are frequent enclosure elements, although many are no longer stock proof and are supplemented with wire fences, which predominate elsewhere. Settlement is limited to a few scattered farmsteads in the eastern and southern parts of the area. Presence of many Bronze age burials on and around Simonside.

6.68 To the south and east of the forest there are also extensive tracts of semi-improved grassland interrupted by small blocky plantations. These areas are less dramatic in their landform. In places heather moorland survives and distinctive patterns resulting from controlled burning are evident

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Tourism and Recreation 3.26
- Historic Landscapes 3.27

Landscape Designations:

6.69 The north western half of this character area is within the Northumberland National Park.

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.70 Landscape Management Guidelines (3): Enhancement of existing character should be applied to this character area. The quality of this landscape has been adversely impacted by insensitive forestry and a decline in the condition of landscape fabric.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.71 Trees, Forests and Woodland: There is significant scope and potential for the restructuring of the forest in line with. Forestry commission design plans that will break up geometric planting patterns, open up the settings of archaeological features and watercourses and introduce greater diversity of forest types and habitats.

6.72 Land management: Outside the forest, the emphasis of policies and initiatives should be aimed at encouraging landowners to look after the landscape as a primary objective, shifting the emphasis away from food production. This would allow both the restoration of landscape fabric (such as stone walls) and the management of the land for nature conservation.

6.73 Restoration of the diversity of semi natural moorland vegetation should be addressed through appropriate management techniques.

Character Area 15	Upper Coquet	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (2)
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View across large undulating arable fields with small coniferous plantations on the horizon. A recently planted roadside hedgerow can be seen in the foreground

Key Characteristics:

- Rippled landform of gently sloping and rounded folds
- Strong enclosure pattern which is suffering degradation erosion due to agricultural intensification

General Description:

6.74 This is an attractive farmed upland fringe landscape consisting of a mosaic of different arable crops and pasture fields overlying a rippled and folded medium scale landform. Small scale woodlands are frequent. A strong pattern of enclosure is evident, although field boundary hedgerows are frequently in very poor condition or have been lost entirely and replaced with wire fences. Few uncultivated or unimproved areas remain within what is evidently good quality farmland. Views to uplands and Northumberland National Park are available in all directions, and the contrast with these simpler, less tamed landscapes is clearly visible. The settlement pattern consists of small isolated farmsteads scattered across the area.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.75 Landscape Management Guidelines (2): Repair and maintenance of existing character should be applied to this character area. The quality of this landscape has been reduced by what appears to have been a steep decline in the condition of landscape fabric associated with intensification of agriculture. This decline specifically relates to loss of hedgerows as landscape features.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.76 Trees, Forests and Woodland: The appropriate guidance for the restoration of hedgerows will vary according to the current condition of the specific section under consideration. Where hedgerows have been unmanaged, the aim should be to restore their functionality by a combination of hedge laying and replanting of gaps. Where hedgerows have been over managed, advice to landowners to change the frequency, height and timing of cuts may be sufficient. Elsewhere, complete replanting may be necessary, in which case plant material should be selected that is locally appropriate in terms of species composition, and preferably sourced with local provenance. New planting needs to be protected from rabbits and livestock with individual guards and/or parallel wire fences until well established. Where hedgerow trees have also been lost, these should also be reintroduced, applying the same principles to species selection.

6.77 Land management: Landscape policies and initiatives should seek continued enhancement of the river corridor through establishment of marginal vegetation; reversion to low intensity grassland management from arable or improved grassland on land adjacent to river channels and planting of new broadleaved woodland may be appropriate along the river valley.

Character Area 16	Coquet Dale	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (2)
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View looking north east across meadows on the right bank of the River Coquet towards the wetlands at Caistron

Key Characteristics:

- Broad, farmed valley with meandering river leading to steeply incised cut through the sandstone hills
- Rich ecological and historic interest
- Overlooked by the distinctive crags of Simonside

General Description:

6.78 This character area is focused on the River Coquet as it meanders through a medium to small scale broad valley of farmland. This is mainly sheep and cattle grazing on meadows enclosed by drystone walls and wire fences and small woodlands and mature trees, both near to the river and further up the valley sides. The landscape is flanked on the south side by the heather-covered Simonside hills and to the north and west by the foothills of the Cheviots. The eastern limit of the character area is the narrow neck of the valley at Rothbury, where the river passes through the Northumberland sandstone ridge. As a relatively unmodified river supporting characteristic fauna and flora, the Coquet is of National and European importance for nature conservation. Between Alwinton and Rothbury the river flows in a transitional zone between fast flowing moorland streams and the lower reaches which cut an incised channel through deep layers of alluvium. In this transitional zone, the river takes a meandering course over a relatively level floodplain. There are frequent settlements on the valley sides and a concentration of sites of archaeological and historic interest along the river.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Mineral Extraction 3.23
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Tourism and Recreation 3.26
- Historic Landscapes 3.27

Landscape Designations:

6.79 A small proportion of this character area at the western, upstream extent of the Coquet falls within the National Park.

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.80 Landscape Management Guidelines (2): Repair and maintenance of existing character should be applied to this area. Landscape polices and initiative should encourage ongoing custodianship of a landscape that is generally well-preserved and in good condition.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.81 Land management: should focus on maintaining and improving the existing habitats alongside the river.

Character Area 17	Coquet Valley	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (2)
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The River Coquet near Brainshaugh Abbey

Key Characteristics:

- Broad, gently v-shaped valley of River Coquet cutting across rolling farmland
- Valley becomes more incised towards the coast
- Riparian woodlands

General Description:

6.82 This is a medium to small scale valley landscape of mixed arable and pasture fields enclosed by a strong pattern of hedgerows and some stone walls. Field patterns appear to be of medieval origin in places, with evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation also apparent. The sense of enclosure increases and scale diminishes in parts due to the containment provided by the incised valley and by the frequent riparian woodlands. The river and immediate bank sides are designated as a SSSI and support a characteristic fauna and flora that are of national significance for nature conservation. The character area is crossed north to south by a number of trunk roads and by the East Coast Mainline Railway. The settlement pattern consists of small settlements which tend to coincide with crossing points of the river and scattered farmsteads. Eighteenth century parkland can be found at Felton Park and Acton House. Hedgerow deterioration is evident in some areas, notably where arable crops are grown and the need for functional boundaries is diminished.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Built Development 3.21
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Tourism and Recreation 3.26
- Historic Landscapes 3.27

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.83 Landscape Management Guidelines (2): Repair and maintenance of existing character should be applied to this character area. The principal aims of landscape planning policies and initiatives should be to encourage the ongoing custodianship of a landscape that is generally well-preserved and in good condition.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.84 Land management: Planning and landscape policy should encourage restoration and improved management of landscape features – particularly deciduous woodlands but also hedgerows, hedgerow trees, riparian meadows and walls. Many woodlands presently receive little or no active management. Consideration should be given to measures that will ensure not only succession of the woodland per se, but also will improve the vitality of the woodland flora and fauna and enhance its role as a useful resource for the community.

Character Area 18	Longframlington / Shilbottle Rolling Farmland	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (4)
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Views looking south east across the character area from near to Rugley

Key Characteristics:

- Medium scale parliamentary enclosure landscape bisected by the A1
- Undulating high ground between the Aln and Coquet valleys
- Predominantly arable with declining hedgerow condition

General Description:

6.85 This character area occupies undulating relatively high ground on the coastal plain between the Aln and Coquet valleys. The dominant influence is agriculture, characterised in the main by regular and rectilinear field units bounded by hedgerows and hedgerow trees originating from the parliamentary enclosures. Agriculture is mixed, though arable is predominant, particularly towards the east. Sizeable coniferous plantations can be found around Swarland and north of Shilbottle. Ancient woodland is also found around Rugley and Swarland.

6.86 Intensification of agriculture is causing an ongoing decline in hedgerow condition, particularly around arable crops where functional enclosure is not required. Although the last colliery closed in the late 1990's, coal mining was formerly a significant presence in this landscape, with collieries at Shilbottle, Whittle and Longframlington. Although full restoration is yet to have been completed, there is little physical evidence of this industry now. Other former industrial activity included lime and tile manufacture. The character area is bisected by the A1 trunk road, East Coast Mainline Railway and electricity pylons. Settlement in this character area comprises numerous scattered farmhouses and clusters of settlements including the villages of Longframlington, Swarland, Newton on the Moor and Shilbottle.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Tourism and Recreation 3.26

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.87 Landscape Management Guidelines (4): Restoration of existing landscape character should be applied to this character area. The principal aims of landscape planning policies and initiatives should be to encourage improved custodianship of a landscape that has declined in quality, principally as a result of agricultural intensification. The single most apparent element to address would be the decline in hedgerows, restoration of which would provide improved visual and ecological coherence.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.88 Trees, Forests and Woodlands: Planning and landscape policies should encourage restoration and improved management of traditional landscape features – particularly field boundary hedgerows and walls. An expansion of broad leaved woodland cover and active management of the remaining ancient woodland resource would be beneficial. Consideration should also be given to re-planting of coniferous plantations so as to broaden their ecological benefit.

6.89 Land management: Intensive farming methods have reduced the opportunities for wildlife to co-exist with agriculture. In parallel with the restoration of landscape features, increased widths of uncultivated field margins and nature conservation buffer strips along water courses should be promoted.

Character Area 19	Wingates Ridge	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (2)
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View south across Wards Hill

Key Characteristics:

- Elevated rolling upland ridge
- Relatively open, medium to large scale
- Some enclosure provided by coniferous shelterbelts

General Description:

6.90 Only the western most part of this character area lies within Alnwick District. This is an exposed upland ridge, consisting of medium to large scale fields divided by wire fences; wind pruned gappy hedgerows and occasional drystone walls. The sense of openness is interrupted by numerous small scale conifer plantations and shelterbelts. Grassland is semi-improved, with frequent scrub and bracken encroachment. The land is grazed by sheep, cattle and horses in fields surrounding large rural properties and smallholdings. The landscape is crossed by a network of narrow lanes, many of which are tree lined and enclosed. There are good vantage points over the surrounding landscape, including views to the National Park to the east, the coast in the west, and over the more verdant valleys to the north and south. At the east of the character area is Longhorsley Moor Site of Special Scientific Interest, considered to be the best example of lowland sub-atlantic heath remaining in Northumberland. There is a caravan park at Todburn Moor.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.91 Landscape Management Guidelines (2): Repair and maintenance of existing character should be applied to this character area. This is a landscape that appears to have increasingly been able to deliver only marginal economic returns. Landscape management has declined as a consequence of this. Changes in agricultural subsidy may offer an opportunity to reverse this. Future management of significant areas of land could be shifted, under the single payment scheme and with the aid of agri-environment grants, to be principally directed at nature conservation and landscape improvement.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.92 Land management: A key focus would be to increase the diversity of the grassland vegetation, ideally creating conditions for the extension of the dry heath habitat found at Longhorsley Moor, which may have once covered much of this landscape. Such areas would need to be managed to prevent scrub encroachment. Re-establishment of dry heath, if seen as feasible and desirable in ecological terms, would need to be guided by agencies with the appropriate expertise including English Nature.

6.93 Trees, Forests and Woodland: Improved management of other existing landscape features, particularly hedgerows, shelterbelts and small woodlands would have landscape and ecological benefits. An aim would be to maintain the contrasts between open, large scale landscapes and the more sheltered, intimate settings such as those found along tree lined lanes. Removal of the smaller blocky conifer plantations is advocated. Other plantations could be wholly or partially replanted with broad leaved species or extended/reduced to achieve a more sympathetic outline. New broad leaved woodland plantations could also be appropriate, particularly on the side slopes of the ridge.

6.94 Guidance would need to be sought from the Forestry Commission in respect of felling and restocking of plantations, both in terms of a strategic view of which blocks should remain and in terms of the detailed design and technical aspects and the potential presence of protected species. Felling of small scale woods is currently uneconomic, so the range of agri-environmental funding mechanisms would need to be explored to find an appropriate incentive for landowners.

Character Area 20	Longwitton Ridge	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (2)
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Historic parkland and estate railings to the south of Cambo

Key Characteristics:

- Elevated, rolling, upland fringe farmland
- Relatively open, medium to large scale
- Numerous shelterbelts and some prominent coniferous plantations

General Description:

6.95 This character area is only partly within former Alnwick District. This character area consists of an undulating east west ridge that separates the valleys of the Font and Wansbeck rivers. Generally open and windswept, much of the area consists of expansive areas of treeless pasture bounded by dry stone walls. In places this is relieved by scrub and / or hedgerow remnants and broken up by plantations and shelter belts. Occasionally, hedgerows and mature trees become more frequent, particularly along roadsides where there are some distinctive ‘tunnels’ of vegetation and also where there are fragments of parkland landscape associated with country estates, which feature sizeable mature trees and which provide a more enclosed pattern. Where they exist, hedgerows seem to be generally in decline. Woodland cover includes the large plantation at Broomfield Fell and numerous smaller coniferous woodlands. There are notable areas of ancient woodland near Longwitton and along Hart Burn and some distinctive mature pine and beech shelterbelts. The settlement pattern generally consists of scattered farmsteads and occasionally small clusters of dwellings.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Historic Landscapes 3.27

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.96 Landscape Management Guidelines (2): Repair and maintenance of existing character should be applied to this character area. The principal aims of landscape planning policies and initiatives should be to encourage the custodianship of a landscape that is generally well-preserved and in good condition, although showing some signs of neglect and loss of quality in places. This neglect is often specific to agricultural economics and pragmatism; with field boundaries around arable land particularly prone to decline and with erection of wire fences a more cost effective measure than wall maintenance. Changes in agricultural subsidy and the availability of agri-environment funding schemes may offer opportunities to reverse this. Improved management of existing landscape features, particularly hedgerows, shelterbelts and small woodlands would have landscape and ecological benefits. An aim should be to maintain the contrasts between open, large scale landscapes and the more sheltered, intimate settings set within them.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.97 Trees, Forests and Woodland: Planning and landscape policy should encourage restoration and improved management of landscape features – particularly hedgerows and walls but also the stock of trees and woodlands, much of which is becoming over-mature and could be lost. For example, the distinctive mature beech and pine shelterbelts found in this area generally consist of single age stock which will have a finite lifespan. Consideration should be given to promotion of re-planting so that a succession can be achieved. Encouragement should be given to landowners to either remove or replant conifer plantations with broadleaves, particularly the smaller blocky plantings and any that are poorly related to landform.

6.98 Land management: Farmers should be encouraged to increase widths of field margins and to incorporate buffer strips managed primarily for nature conservation along water courses.

Character Area 22	Longhorsley Rolling Farmland	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (4)
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View across farmland towards West Shield Hill, just north of Morpeth

Key Characteristics:

- Medium to small scale undulating farmed landscape
- Frequent, generally small scale woodlands
- Hedgerows generally well maintained
- Trunk roads exert strong influence

General Description:

6.99 Only a small proportion of this character area at the western edge falls within former Alnwick District. This landscape has a strong enclosure pattern and an intricate network of small settlements, farmsteads, hedgerow trees and woodlands. Dominated by a relatively regular patchwork of arable crops and pasture, the land is generally enclosed by a strong pattern of hedgerows with hedgerow trees, although in many areas this is becoming weak as hedgerows are removed or become dysfunctional. Around Longhorsley field sizes are smaller and patterns are less regular, possibly indicating that they are older, possibly medieval. The fertile farmland of the character area is cut by two of the county's major roads, the A1 from Newcastle to Berwick and A697 to Coldstream. These fast roads exert a significant influence on the landscape through severance and due to visual and aural intrusion. The undulating to rolling topography occasionally provides expansive views towards the uplands or the coast. Settlement mainly consists of scattered farmsteads and small clusters of dwellings.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Tourism and Recreation 3.26

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.100 Landscape Management Guidelines (4): Restoration of existing character should be applied to this character area. The principal aims of landscape planning policies and initiatives should be to encourage improved custodianship of a landscape that has declined in quality as a result of agricultural intensification.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.101 Land management: Relaxation of field margins and the improved management of existing landscape features, particularly hedgerows but also woodlands, watercourses and wetlands would have landscape and ecological benefits. The appropriate guidance for the restoration of hedgerows will vary according to the current condition of the specific section under consideration. Where hedgerows have been unmanaged, the aim should be to restore their functionality by a combination of hedge laying and replanting of gaps. Where hedgerows have been over managed, advice to landowners to change the frequency, height and timing of cuts may be sufficient. Elsewhere, complete replanting may be necessary, in which case plant material should be selected that is locally appropriate in terms of species composition, and preferably sourced with local provenance. New planting needs to be protected from rabbits and livestock with individual guards and/or parallel wire fences until well established. Where hedgerow trees have also been lost, these should also be reintroduced, applying the same principles to species selection.

6.102 Trees, Forests and Woodland: Screen planting initiatives along trunk roads should aim to maintain a balance between mitigating the effects of the road as experienced from the landscape and allowing views into the landscape for road users.

Character Area 23	Font and Wansbeck Valleys	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (2)
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View across improved pasture to riparian woodland alongside the River Font at Shelly, south east of Netherwitton

Key Characteristics:

- Medium to small scale mixed farming landscape with enclosure provided principally by hedgerows
- Gentle v-shaped valleys set into rolling farmland
- Riparian woodlands are frequent alongside meandering river channels
- Significant local estate influences

General Description:

6.103 Only a small proportion of this Character Area at the western edge falls within Alnwick District. This character area consists of two attractive lowland valleys with a medium to small scale enclosure pattern attributable to a combination of landform, frequent woodlands and tall hedgerows. Agriculture is mixed, with improved pasture giving way to larger arable field units on the gentler slopes. In arable areas, where there is no need for stock control, hedgerows are often in poor, gappy condition. Riparian woodlands are a particularly characteristic feature, often taking on the meandering form of the hidden river channel. There are several large country estates within the character area and these exert a significant influence on landscape character through their use of specific and consistent traditional materials and styles of construction and land management measures. Examples are the use of stone in construction of cottages, farms, bridges, walls etc. and landscape elements including steel railings and mature trees laid out as parkland. As is frequently the case along rivers, there is much evidence of early settlement including a deserted medieval village, roman camps and an early Norman castle at Mitford.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Land Management 3.24
- Trees, Forests and Woodland 3.25
- Tourism and Recreation 3.26
- Historic Landscapes 3.27

Vision / Strategic landscape aims:

6.104 Landscape Management Guidelines (2): Repair and maintenance of existing character should be applied to this character area. The principal aims of landscape planning policies and initiatives should be to enable the perpetuation of land-uses that will conserve the special qualities of the landscape.

Specific landscape guidance:

6.105 Land management: It is envisaged that subsidies provided by agri-environment programmes could facilitate more active management of riparian woodlands and the reintroduction of traditional, less intensive agricultural stewardship. This could include such measures as converting to organic methods and restoring improved pasture to unfertilised flood plain hay meadows.

Character Area 29	Elsdon Valley	LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (1)
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View south across the wooded valley of the Elsdon Burn

Key Characteristics:

- Isolated and enclosed medium scale valley
- Dramatic natural amphitheatre around the settlement of Elsdon

General Description:

6.106 Only the southern part of the character area falls within the planning regime of the former Alnwick District. A relatively isolated and sparsely populated valley with significant historical interest. Enclosure to the north, south and east by upland topography creates a dramatic natural bowl. Within this bowl sits the historic village of Elsdon, with stone buildings around a village green and ridge and furrow markings in the surrounding fields. Land cover consists mainly of a pattern of improved pasture interspersed by occasional small woodland blocks and a pattern of stone walls and post and wire fencing.

6.107 The landscape opens up to the south west, along the valley of the Elsdon Burn, which joins the Raylees Burn to flow eventually into the River Rede. The character area is bisected by the A696 trunk road.

Relevant Forces for Change:

- Infrastructure Development 3.22
- Land Management 3.24
- Tourism and Recreation 3.26
- Historic Landscapes 3.27

Landscape designations:

6.108 The northern part of the character area is located within the Northumberland National Park

Vision / Strategic Landscape Aims:

6.109 Landscape Management Guidelines (1): Proactive Conservation of existing character should be applied to this character area. The principal aims of landscape planning policies and initiatives should be to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the landscape.

Specific Landscape Guidance:

6.110 Land management: Existing medieval field patterns and enclosure features should be preserved and where appropriate restored. Improved awareness and interpretation of the cultural significance of everyday landscape features e.g. ridge and furrow earthworks would be beneficial both to land managers and visitors. The National Park Authority has been working on detailed studies of boundary features in the Elsdon area and their advice should be sought in respect of these.

7 SETTLEMENT EXPANSION

7.1 This section of the SPD looks at the scope for settlement expansion within former Alnwick district from a purely landscape perspective.

ALNWICK & AMBLE SETTLEMENT STUDY

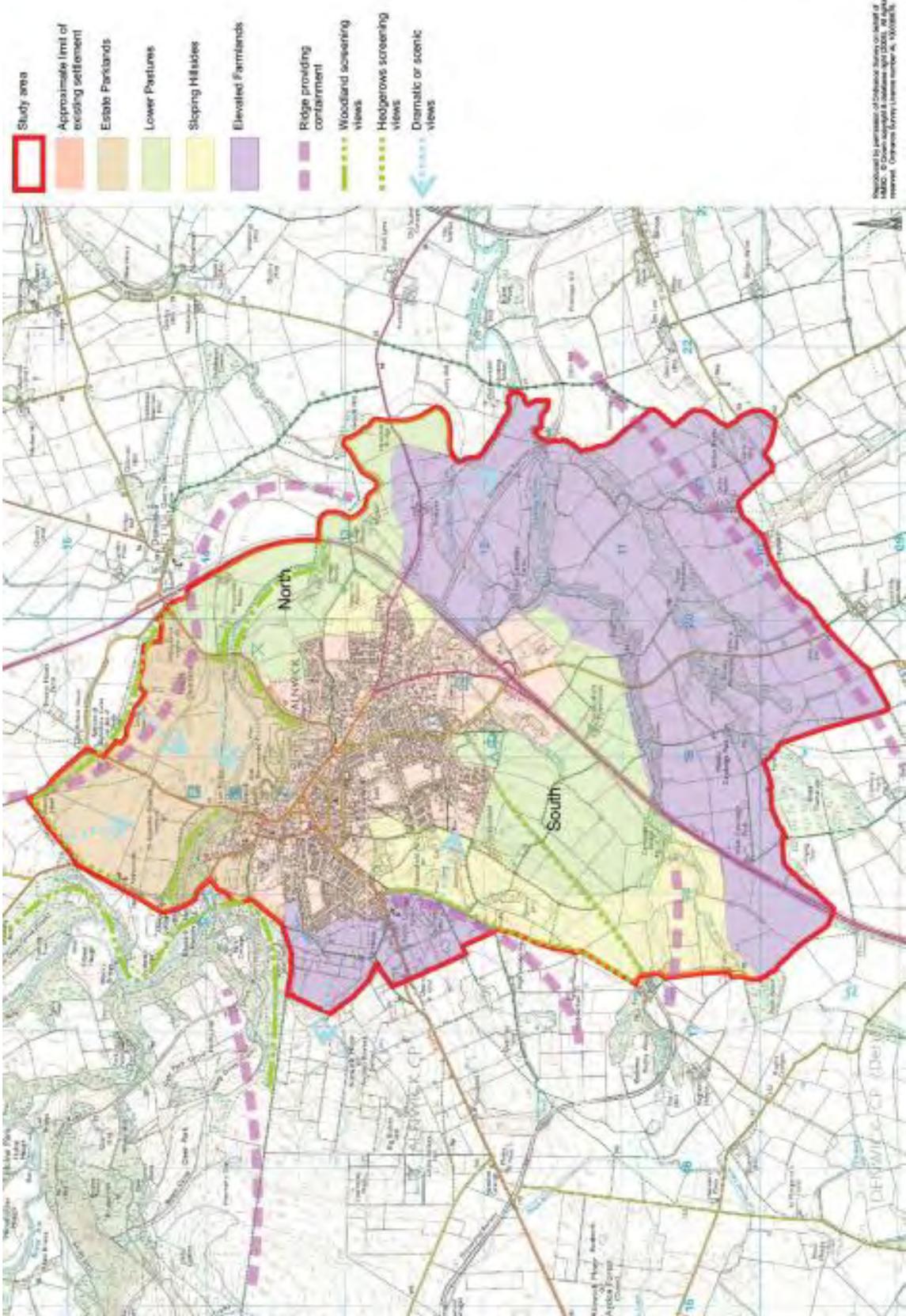
Need for the Study

7.2 Due to increasing demand for expansion of the existing settlements of Alnwick and Amble, Alnwick District Council commissioned a study in March 2008 to identify the suitability of areas surrounding the two towns for future settlement expansion. The study principally addressed the demand for future housing expansion, but also considered the possibility of expansion of commercial and industrial areas, where appropriate. The study also took account of the potential for the construction of an extension to Percy Drive (Amble).

7.3 It must be emphasised that this study looked at the potential for settlement expansion from a purely landscape standpoint and that other factors may ultimately influence whether or not any of the sites identified are appropriate for development.

7.4 The study looked at the context of each settlement and subdivided each into landscape character areas as shown on Figures 2 and 3. Each character area was described and considered in terms of the key characteristics that could affect settlement expansion. The study identified potential settlement expansions in Alnwick (eight sites) and Amble (three sites) and then considered the sensitivity of the character areas to development and identified the principal constraints on development. The locations of these sites are shown on Figure 4 (Alnwick) and Figure 5 (Amble).

Figure 2 - Alnwick Settlement Landscape Character Areas



Opportunities for Settlement Expansion: Alnwick

7.5 Eight opportunities for settlement expansion have been identified within the Alnwick study area, six of which are close to the A1. The locations of the sites are illustrated on Figure 4. The character areas referred to are shown on Figure 2.

7.6 Sites A, B, C, D & E are all located within the “Lower Pastures” and “Sloping Hillides” character areas (figure two) and offer the least constraints in landscape terms. Development of sites C, H and G could increase the perception that the town is continuing to expand into open countryside beyond the A1 following recent (and continuing) construction of industrial estates in the Cawledge Farm area. Good layout design together with the establishment of appropriate landscape features already found in the area could mitigate the adverse effects of further expansion. In addition, though a very obvious feature, the A1 is man-made and is not a natural feature which contributes to the setting of the town. As such, it is an artificial barrier, its alignment presumably having been chosen to follow the most suitable gradients and curvature. Site F, within the “Sloping Hillides” character area, is slightly less favoured. Sites A-D could be accessed directly from existing A1 junctions in combination with the B1340, Willowburn Avenue, Weavers Way or an unnamed lane leading to Greensfield. Site E could be accessed from the B6341. Sites F, G and H could be accessed from the A1068.

Site A

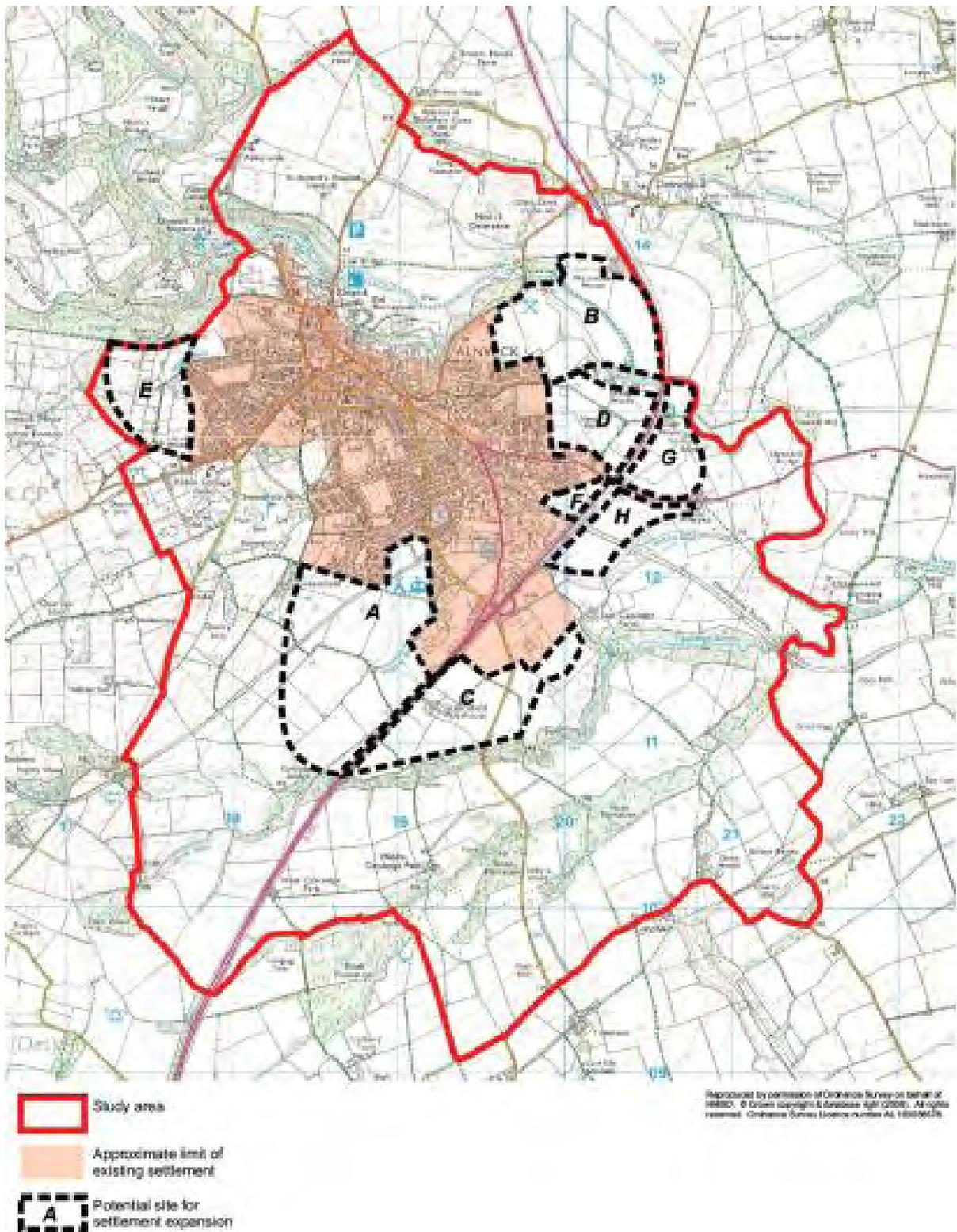
7.7 Site A is in the Greensfield/ Willow Burn area to the south of the town. It consists of flat or very gently sloping open pasture land in an area of low sensitivity.

7.8 Positive features of the site include: the modest sense of containment provided by the higher ground rising on all sides, assisted by the existing residential, recreational and commercial development on the south and south east of the town; connections could readily be made from the northern parts of the site to the existing road and foot network to the town centre; nearby shopping and recreational facilities; the southern and western parts of the site would enjoy easy access to the wider and more attractive countryside beyond.

7.9 Disadvantages include: many parts of the site have clear views of the A1 and the new industrial estates at Cawledge and there is a lack of a robust development edge to the south. Additional investment would be required in pedestrian and cycle infrastructure to maintain sustainable transport links to the town centre and established facilities from the more distant parts of what is a relatively large site.

7.10 Mitigation of these disadvantages may be possible: the new development could provide its own screening of the commercial estates. The channel of the Willow Burn, which already carries riverside vegetation of trees and bushes, could be reinforced by a linear woodland planting scheme. To the south, existing tree and hedge-lines could be reinforced. There is also the opportunity to extend the network of existing narrow woodlands which form a feature of the adjacent Elevated Farmlands character area.

Figure 4 - Alnwick Potential Settlement Expansion Sites



Site B

7.11 Site B consists of a very large flat pasture field on the north bank of the River Aln and further smaller fields on the south bank. Boundaries to the north are provided by a track running to Waterside House and the A1 embankment. The site has little visual association with the town, though the housing estates on rising land to the north of the A1068 can be seen through intervening riverside vegetation.

7.12 Positive features of the site include: the River Aln, with a riverside walk on its north bank; an attractive area of woodland at the site's western approach together with further copses and belts of woodland to the north (outside the site); visual containment provided by the A1 embankment and land rising up to Denwick to the north of Waterside House. These features could be enhanced or developed to provide an attractive setting for development. Access to the site would be straightforward, by means of a spur off the B1340.

7.13 Disadvantages of the site are: limited opportunities for pedestrian access to the town centre via the B1340 highway; parts of the site lie within the River Aln floodplain; views of and noise from traffic on the A1.

7.14 Mitigation measures could include: provision of a new footpath via a footbridge over the River Aln to connect to an existing footpath on the south of the river; development of the floodplain area as a riverside park, with building carried out on higher land to the north; planting of a woodland screen along the west embankment of the A1.

Site C

7.15 Site C is a large open area of pasture fields to the east of the A1 in the Greensfield Moorhouse/ Cawledge Farm area. It lies within the Lower Pastures character area and has a very low or low sensitivity to settlement expansion.

7.16 Advantages of the site are: easy access from either the A1 or the road to Shilbottle; separation of HGVs and other site traffic from the town centre; availability of a robust development edge (woods associated with the valley of the Cawledge Burn).

7.17 Disadvantages of the site are: potential high visibility from elevated land to the east, south and west of the town; increase in encroachment of the settlement on open countryside; physical separation and poor pedestrian access from the town could further reduce the sense of arrival at the town, via the Shilbottle Road, that is already in evidence as a consequence of existing expansion.

7.18 Mitigation of these disadvantages may be possible through use of careful site design; selection of recessive colours for buildings; planting of screen woodland along the west edge of the A1; provision of alternative footways and/ or cycle paths from the town; development of entrance features appropriate to a minor road entrance to an industrial estate; reinforcement of existing landscape features such as woodland belts to contain the urban edge.

Site D

7.19 Site D lies in the Sloping Hillside character area. It is an area of open sloping and undulating grassland dropping down to the Lower Pastures character area and Site B. The sensitivity of this character area is mixed, but the features which are rated as medium sensitivity or higher for the area generally are not particularly sensitive in this parcel of land.

7.20 Positive features of the site are: steep topography which could facilitate good views out of the development; existing hedgerows along footpaths could be enhanced to provide screening of the sewage works.

7.21 Disadvantages are: access may not be straightforward to achieve; the land is steeply sloping in places and may pose construction challenges; views of the sewage works may be possible; the flatter parts of the site are relatively small and it may therefore not be economic to develop.

7.22 Mitigation of these disadvantages may be possible by: creating access off Alnmouth Road or via new estate roads through the southern part of site B; steep topography may result in an interesting and distinctive building style or layout; screening of the sewage works may be possible by woodland planting.

Site E

7.23 Site E lies within the Elevated Farmlands character area to the west of Alnwick, between Hulne Park and the B6341. It lies on an area of slightly sloping ground close to a housing estate and allotment gardens. The site is on rather elevated ground and is traversed by the Wash Burn, with its associated unmanaged hedgerow vegetation, and bounded by a footpath. The existing settlement edge is clearly defined by housing, but is not robust as it does not appear to follow or be contained by any landscape features.

7.24 Positive features of the site are: access may be possible from Ratten Row, although access from the B6341 combined with a road connection through from Chapel Lands would be preferable; good pedestrian access to the town centre; Hulne Park would provide a robust northern edge to the development.

7.25 Disadvantages of the site are: lack of a robust western and southern development edge; a relatively exposed site.

7.26 Mitigation may be possible through: reinforcement of woodland to the west, along Stocking Burn and up towards the very slight ridge line separating the Stocking and Wash Burns.

Site F

7.27 Site F lies within the Sloping Hillside character area, but is an eastern outlier, physically separated from and of a lower sensitivity than the main body of the character area. It is a small site bounded by the A1, the A1068 and existing development.

7.28 Positive features of the site are: access possible from the A1068 Alnmouth Road; robust boundaries to south west and south east formed by existing woodland or screen planting along the A1; good pedestrian access to the town centre.

7.29 Disadvantages of the site are: it is steeply sloping at its southern end; it may suffer from noise from the A1; it is small and may be difficult to develop economically; commercial/ industrial development may have an adverse effect upon neighbouring housing.

7.30 Mitigation may be possible through: steep topography may result in an interesting and distinctive building style or layout; further screening of the A1 and nearby housing may be possible by woodland planting.

Site G

7.31 Site G lies to the north of the A1068 / A1 over bridge, mainly within the Lower Pastures character area. Sensitivity to expansion within this character area is low. If site H were to be developed site G could form a further extension to the north.

7.32 Positive features of the site are: fairly level ground overall; good access off the A1068; more steeply rising ground to the east and the river Aln to the north would provide a robust edge.

7.33 Disadvantages of the site are: direct access to the A1 would not be possible and access would be via the A1068 only; some parts of the site lie within the River Aln floodplain; parts of the site are locally steep; the site would be visible from residential development on the east fringe of Alnwick and higher land further to the west of the town.

7.34 Mitigation may be possible through: avoidance of floodplain and steeper areas for development; reinforcement of existing woodland planting along both sides of the A1; careful site design; use of recessive colours.

Site H

7.35 Site H is on the opposite side of the A1068 to Site G, in the angle between it and the top of the A1 east embankment in the Elevated Farmlands character area. The southern (higher) part of the site is relatively flat but the northern part is steeper. The sensitivity of this character area to settlement expansion is low.

7.36 Positive features of the site are: access to the site would be straightforward from the A1068; woodland along the Willow Burn valley and fringing the dismantled railway line to Alnmouth Station would provide a robust edge to the development

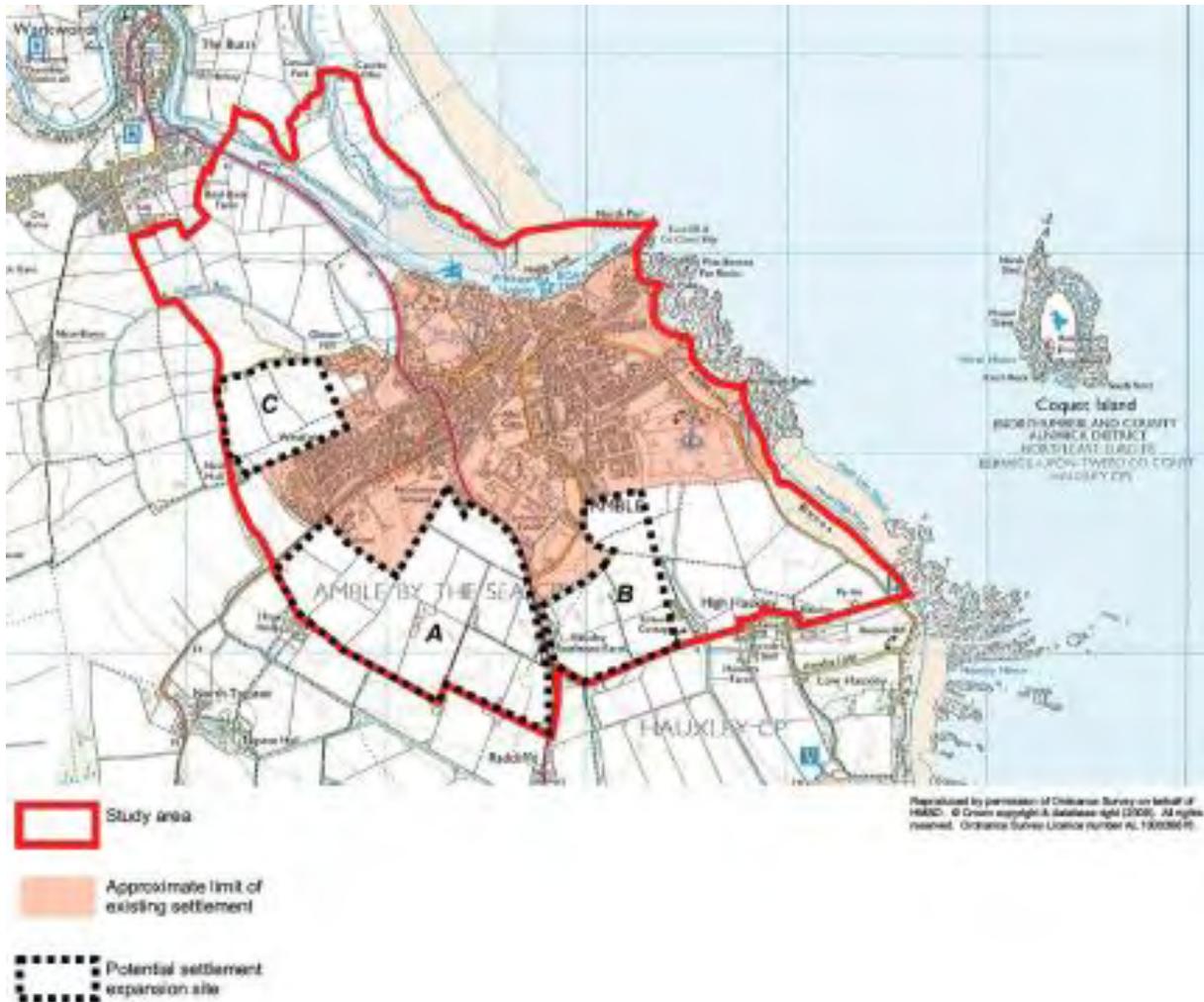
7.37 Disadvantages of the site are: access to the A1 may be difficult without the creation of a new junction; the level part of the site is divided by the line of the dismantled railway which it may be desirable to retain for future transport demands, thereby reducing the space available; a reduced site would be relatively small and it may therefore be uneconomic for development; views of the site may be possible from residential parts of Alnwick and higher land further to the west of the town.

7.38 Mitigation may be possible through: avoidance of steeper areas for development; reinforcement of the existing woodland planting along the east embankment of the A1 with careful site design and the use of recessive colours.

7.39 Opportunities for Settlement Expansion: Amble

7.40 Three opportunities for settlement expansion have been identified at Amble, as shown on Figure 5. Two sites (A & B) lie to either side of the A1068, with Site C accessible from either the B6345 or Guilden Lane.

Figure 5 - Amble Potential Settlement Expansion Sites



Site A

7.41 Site A lies within the Restored Landscapes character area. The site consists of flat and open pasture land, with few existing buildings and has a generally very low sensitivity. There would be good access off the A1068, B6345 or the proposed Percy Drive West extension. The only feature identified with a higher sensitivity is the bridleway on its southern boundary. This feature could either be incorporated into any proposals or could be diverted to a new alignment.

7.42 Positive features of the site include: a flat, open site providing few layout constraints; good connections by road to the town centre, with the potential for pedestrian links to be created; access to shopping and educational facilities; potential to effect landscape improvements to an area that has few attractive features, thereby improving the setting of the town and potentially providing additional recreational resources for residents.

7.43 Disadvantages include: its present characterless nature could be reinforced by poor design. The development could encourage urban sprawl. Construction costs may be higher for restored land.

7.44 Mitigation of these disadvantages may be possible: Careful master-planning could provide this area with a coherent, high quality character. Suitable boundary treatments could provide screening and structure; it would also provide opportunities for the development of high quality public open spaces.

Site B

7.45 Site B lies within the Inland Pastures character area to the east of the A1068, between the highway and Kirkwell Cottages. The site consists of pastures bounded by hedgerows and has a low sensitivity to settlement expansion. Large buildings could have an adverse or dominating effect upon the neighbouring Coastal Pastures character area.

7.46 Positive features of the site include: generally flat, open site providing few layout constraints with good access off the A1068, Percy Drive or Hauxley Lane; good connections by road to the town centre; pedestrian links to the coast; access to shopping facilities; potential to effect landscape improvements to an area that has few attractive features, thereby improving the setting of the town and potentially providing additional recreational resources for residents.

7.47 Disadvantages of the site include: the site is largely separated from the town centre by an industrial estate, which may engender a sense of isolation and encourage car use; lack of existing landscape features to provide a robust boundary; risk of coalescence with High Hauxley and Kirkwell Cottages, which would have an adverse effect upon the landscape character and setting of these two small hamlets.

7.48 Mitigation of these disadvantages may be possible: Existing well-used footpaths could be incorporated into the layout to encourage connectivity to the town; suitable boundary treatments could provide screening and structure; it would also provide opportunities for the development of high quality public open spaces, potentially incorporating part of the Coastal Pastures character area in order to provide a corridor to the sea and provide a more satisfactory edge to the caravan park and existing residential development. Such an open space could also be used to protect the setting of High Hauxley and Kirkwell Cottages by preventing coalescence with Amble.

Site C

7.49 Site C lies to the west of the Amble West Cemetery and is bounded by Guilden Road, Gloster Hill and the B6345. It is within the Inland Pastures character area and consists of almost flat pasture fields bounded by gappy hedgerows. There are potential difficulties with access and adverse impacts of development upon the adjoining Coquet Valley character area. It is also suggested that should expansion be permitted in this area that land to the north of the present cemetery should be allocated for a future burial ground extension.

7.50 Positive features of the site include: hedgerows with hedgerow trees along the boundary roads providing modest containment; a flat and open site presenting few layout constraints; potential access off the B6345, Gloster Hill or Guilden road; reasonable pedestrian links to the town centre via West Drive; potential to create a strong edge to the town running along Gloster Hill/Guilden Road.

7.51 Disadvantages of the site include: direct road access to the town and good pedestrian links to recreation and educational facilities may be difficult to achieve; from some viewpoints, development may appear to encroach upon the open ground lying between Amble and Warkworth; existing boundary features are not very robust.

7.52 Mitigation of some of these disadvantages may be possible: Suitable boundary treatments could provide screening and structure and a more robust settlement edge; careful attention to design could avoid adverse impacts upon the Coquet Valley character area.

SETTLEMENT MATRIX

7.53 As part of the joint Alnwick and Castle Morpeth Landscape Character Assessment, each of the principal settlements in the district was examined in respect of its potential for future expansion. The result of this work is presented in the following Figure 6. It must again be emphasised that this work considers only landscape issues and that there are many other factors that will ultimately dictate whether or not any particular site is appropriate for development.

Figure 6 - Potential for future expansion		Settlement	Character Area (s)	Landscape Management Guideline(s)	Commentary
1	Alnmouth / Bilton / Hipsburn / Lesbury*	3, 7	1, 2, 3	PROACTIVE CONSERVATION REPAIR & MAINTENANCE ENHANCEMENT	The constrained and historic layout of Alnmouth is such that there is little scope to add new development that would not have adverse effects on its setting. There may however be some capacity, in purely landscape terms for small scale infill or expansion around Bilton, Hipsburn and Lesbury. These settlements have a suburban character and there would be benefit to the wider landscape setting in providing a buffer between development and the surrounding open countryside.
2	Alnwick	URBAN	n/a		See section 7.5
3	Amble	URBAN	n/a		See section 7.39
4	Embleton	6	1, 4	PROACTIVE CONSERVATION RESTORATION	This spacious coastal settlement is constrained by the former whinstone quarry to the east. To the south, mature vegetation provides a backdrop to the historic village core including a Norman church and Pele tower. The least constrained areas for expansion in landscape terms would seem to be to the north and west of the existing settlement.
5	Felton	17	2	REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	This settlement, located at a crossing point of the River Coquet has extended in a linear fashion alongside the roadside away from the river. Any further expansion, should it be required, should occur away from the river corridor. Most likely suitable land appears to be that to the north of the existing settlement boundary.

Figure 6 - Potential for future expansion				
Settlement	Character Area (s)	Landscape Management Guideline(s)	Commentary	
6	Longframlington	4	RESTORATION	This settlement has expanded westwards from its original core. Many of the surrounding fields are possibly medieval in origin. Limited scope for expansion may exist to north.
7	Longhoughton	1, 4	PROACTIVE CONSERVATION RESTORATION	This settlement has experienced substantial expansion from its original core – now located at the southern end of the village. Expansion has been concentrated to the north end of the settlement, particularly to the west of the B1339 infilling towards the east coast mainline railway. Future growth, if required, is likely to be least damaging at the south west corner of the settlement, infilling alongside the rail corridor.
8	Rothbury	2	REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	Rothbury is a small town in a fine landscape setting, at the point where the Coquet valley passes through the Northumberland sandstone ridge. Much of the centre of the town is a conservation area. The often steep terrain has been influential in the extent and pattern of development. Recent development has consisted of infill and redevelopment of Brownfield sites. Zonation of any substantial future development would need to be subject to a detailed landscape capacity study.
9	Shilbottle	4	RESTORATION	Shilbottle is a rather fragmented linear settlement whose original village core remains isolated from subsequent development of green field sites to the east and west. Future development, if required, should attempt to link and consolidate existing elements and ideally incorporate landscape infrastructure.

Figure 6 - Potential for future expansion		Settlement	Character Area (s)	Landscape Management Guideline(s)	Commentary
10	Swarland	18	4	RESTORATION	This settlement and adjoining leisure development sites are characterised by a strong woodland structure. There is an opportunity, should expansion of this settlement be appropriate, to integrate with the existing settlement by incorporating bold new woodland plantings into the development. Most likely areas for development would seem to be to the south east of the existing settlement.
11	Thropton	16	2	REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	This is an attractive village overlooking the Coquet valley to the west of Rothbury. The principle pattern of development to date has been westward from the core along the B6341. Topography would seem to constrain anything other than further expansion in the same direction, which would not seem to be particularly desirable.
12	Togston	5	5	RE-CREATION	This is one of a number of former mining villages on the coastal plain, whose form is incongruous in a rural setting. These settlements did not grow in an organic way, instead consisting in general of regular, uniform, building types with linear alignments and with often abrupt boundaries with open countryside. In landscape terms there would be significant merit in addressing this urban edge, with the aim of establishing a softer transition zone. This zone would include a significant amount of tree planting to achieve a visual break and could, where other capacity considerations allow, incorporate a degree of settlement expansion, as well as recreational opportunities. It is recommended that landscape masterplans are prepared for these settlements (or where appropriate clusters of settlements).

Figure 6 - Potential for future expansion			
Settlement	Character Area (s)	Landscape Management Guideline(s)	Commentary
13	3	1, 3	The constrained and historic layout of Warkworth is such that there is little scope to add new development that would not have adverse effects on its setting.
		RESTORATION ENHANCEMENT	

8 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SOURCES

THE LANDSCAPE PROFESSION

8.1 The landscape profession consists of landscape designers, managers and scientists who are members of the Landscape Institute, the relevant Chartered Institute in the UK for landscape architects. Landscape architects can provide an invaluable service to the design team in the early stages of a project, ensuring that the end result is acceptable in terms of its impact on the surrounding landscape and complies with relevant planning policy.

When to involve a Landscape Architect

8.2 Developers should seek landscape advice in the early stages of project development. Early involvement of a landscape architect as part of the design team to help determine the form, scale and siting of new developments, as well as assessing their potential impact, can be invaluable.

8.3 Landscape architects are specialists in understanding the diverse aspects of landscape. Relevant experience is important with some Landscape Architects more experienced in urban landscape design and others specialising in assessment of rural and semi-natural settings. Therefore, always ask about previous experience prior to appointing a landscape architect for your project.

8.4 A list of members of registered practices is kept by the Landscape Institute. For information and registered landscape practices in the UK visit the Landscape Institute website: www.l-i.org.uk

HISTORIC LANDSCAPES

Historic Landscape Characterisation

8.5 Historic Landscape Characterisation consists of mapping and analysing the historic dimension of the present day rural and urban landscape. It is a complementary discipline to Landscape Character Assessment with similar underpinnings in so much as it seeks to interpret the whole of the landscape in heritage terms as distinct from the previous (and still predominant) approach of identifying and protecting only what was perceived to have the highest value. A national programme of characterisation is ongoing, co-ordinated by English Heritage. An assessment of the whole of Northumberland was completed in 2008.

Designed landscapes

8.6 There are many examples of existing woodlands and parklands across the district. In order to preserve these areas, they need to be managed and replanted. In particular, many mature features such as lines and avenues of trees and parkland tree specimens have become over mature. Difficult decisions will often need to be made to replace declining over-mature or dead trees with new even-aged stock. Where new development is proposed in or near designed landscapes as much attention should be paid to the use

of appropriate plant species and forms as will be paid to the use of appropriate architectural forms and materials. Species should be selected to match those that were planted historically as part of that landscape and planting should not conflict with the intentions of the original layout.

AONB DESIGN GUIDE

8.7 The Northumberland Coast AONB covers an area of 53 square miles along 40 miles of coastline from Warkworth to Berwick-upon-Tweed. This narrow sliver of countryside, never more than a mile and a half wide, contains some of the most dramatic coastal scenery in the country; sweeping sandy beaches backed by deep sand dunes, high rocky cliffs and islands – and behind it all, the long-cultivated and rich farmland of the coastal plain.

8.8 A Management Plan and Design Guide have been prepared to protect the qualities of the AONB and inform appropriate new development. The Design Guide implements the policies developed in the Management Plan in which good design and building conservation were identified as high priorities.

8.9 Developers of sites within the AONB should consult these documents which can be obtained from the Northumberland Coast AONB Partnership (2004).

NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

8.10 The Northumberland National Park Authority is both the strategic and local planning authority within the area of the National Park. They are therefore responsible for preparing, monitoring and implementing the Local Development Framework for the area. Following the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, these Plans will be replaced by the Local Development Framework.

8.11 In preparing policy for the area the Park Authority works to achieve the National Park Purposes and to pursue the aims set down in the Northumberland National Park Management Plan. These requirements mean that planning policy for National Parks is made in circumstances different to that of most planning authorities.

Building Design Guide

8.12 The Northumberland National Park has had an adopted Building Design Guide since 1995, subsequently revised in 1998. This new version builds on the previous work but extends the content to include important issues such as Sustainable Construction, Renewable Energy, and Accessibility for All which are now embedded firmly in national, regional, and local policy. There is also a greater openness to innovative contemporary design where new functions are required in our contemporary lifestyle or public culture and new forms and materials reflect technological developments today. Whilst the intention is still to protect the special qualities of the National Park there is also a desire to encourage a high standard of contemporary architecture of relevance to the 21st century.

<http://www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk/livingin/planning/planningpolicyandguidance/buildingdesignguide.htm>

NORTHUMBERLAND BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

8.13 The term ‘biodiversity’ is derived from ‘biological diversity’ and refers to all living plants and animals on earth and the complex and fragile natural systems that they support.

8.14 Biodiversity is inextricably linked to the landscape and as such any direct landscape effects caused by a development will more often than not also have an ecological dimension. Furthermore, landscape proposals are often the principal means of providing ecological mitigation. It is therefore useful to consider landscape and biodiversity issues in tandem.

8.15 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan is the UK Government's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity signed in 1992. It describes the UK's biological resources and commits to a detailed plan for the protection of these resources. Nationally there are Species Action Plans, Habitat Action Plans and Local Biodiversity Action Plans all of which have targeted actions. Priority Species and Habitats are regularly reviewed and targets set against priorities.

8.16 Responsibility for the implementation of the UK BAP in Northumberland falls with the Northumberland Biodiversity Partnership. This is a collection of organisations and individuals working together to conserve, enhance and promote biodiversity in Northumberland.

8.17 Individual plans have been developed to reflect those habitats and species which are characteristic of Northumberland's natural heritage and most at risk from loss, fragmentation and deterioration of quality. Specific actions within the individual plans vary depending on the species or habitat and range from practical conservation management and survey work, through to promotional activities and working with policy makers. Where development is proposed that may affect a BAP species or habitat, it may be a material planning consideration.

8.18 Details of the habitats and species that have been identified as priorities for protection and conservation in the county can be found in the Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan. This document is available on line at:

<http://www.northumberlandbiodiversity.org.uk/index.asp>

TOWARDS A NEW VERNACULAR

8.19 This document was produced by the Countryside Agency (now known as Natural England) to encourage a high standard of development in the countryside that contributes to landscape character. The aim of the document is to explain that high standards of development are not simply aesthetic and should include evidence of sustainable design and construction in order to develop a future heritage that is meaningful and viable. Development should aim to contribute positively to an area making it a pleasant place to be and incorporating social, environmental and economic benefits. This approach is established in broad terms by recent government policy in PPS1, PPS7 and PPS9. The opportunity to deliver such benefits should be considered in the design of new buildings and incorporated into them where possible. The following principles are reproduced from ‘Towards a New Vernacular’ and may help designers to consider the impact of development on the wider environment.

8.20 The document is available to download on the Natural England website:

<http://www.northumberlandbiodiversity.org.uk/index.asp>

Analysis (landscape)	The process of breaking the landscape down into its component parts to understand how it is made up.
Assessment (landscape)	An umbrella term for description, classification and analysis of landscape.
Classification	A process of sorting the landscape into different types using selected criteria but without attaching relative values to the different kinds of landscape.
Compensation	The measures taken to offset or compensate for residual adverse effects that cannot be mitigated, or for which mitigation cannot entirely eliminate adverse effects.
Countryside	The rural environment and its associated communities (including the coast).
Cumulative effects	The summation of effects that result from changes caused by a development in conjunction with other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions.
Diversity	Where a variety of qualities or characteristics occurs.
Element	A component part of the landscape (for example, roads, hedges, woods).
Enhancement	Landscape improvement through restoration, reconstruction or creation.
Environmental Impact Assessment	The process of evaluation of the effects on the environment of particular development proposals.
Field pattern	The pattern of hedges and walls that define fields in farmed landscapes.
Incongruous landscape elements	An element of the landscape that is out of place or inconsistent with the prevailing characteristics of the landscape
Landcover	Combination of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface.
Landform	Combinations of slope and elevation that produce the shape and form of the land.
Landscape and Visual Assessment	A process by which landscape effects and visual effects of development are formally assessed. Best practice is set out in the publication "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact

	Assessment” 2 nd Edition 2002, published jointly by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.
Landscape capacity	The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without unacceptable adverse effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed.
Landscape character	The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape and how this is perceived by people. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape.
Landscape effects	Change in the elements, characteristics, character and qualities of the landscape as a result of development. The effects can be positive or negative and are measured by following an established methodology (see landscape and visual assessment)
Landscape quality (or condition)	Based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place.
Landscape sensitivity	The extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character.
Land use	The primary use of the land, including both rural and urban activities.
Local distinctiveness	A term used to describe the details and characteristics that are specific to a locality and which combine to make one place different to another
Methodology	The specific approach and techniques used for a given study.
Mitigation	Measures, including any process, activity or design to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for adverse landscape and visual effects of a development project.
Quality	See landscape quality .
Receptor	Physical landscape resource, special interest or viewer group that will experience an effect.
Sense of place (<i>genius loci</i>)	The essential character and spirit of an area: <i>genius loci</i> literally means ‘spirit of the place’.

Sensitive/sensitivity	See landscape sensitivity .
Significant visual harm	Visual harm is a term used to describe negative visual effects (see visual effects below). Significant effects are those exceeding thresholds set out in the methodology for the assessment of the development in question. (see landscape and visual assessment)
Tranquillity	In the context of this study, tranquillity is a measure of the extent to which an area is affected by the sight and sound of urbanisation and its associated infrastructure including roads, pylons, quarries etc.
Visual effect	Change in the appearance of the landscape as a result of development. This can be positive (ie beneficial or an improvement) or negative (ie adverse or a detraction) and is measured by following an established methodology (see landscape and visual assessment)



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